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LEIGH HUNT





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CONTENTS

| | PAGE |
|--|------|
| INTRODUCTION | 9 |
| CALENDAR OF PRINCIPAL EVENTS IN LEIGH HUNT'S LIFE | 27 |
| APPRECIATIONS AND TESTIMONIA | 28 |
| POETRY | 33 |
| ABOU BEN ADHEM | 33 |
| THE NILE | 34 |
| TO THE GRASSHOPPER | 35 |
| ON A LOCK OF MILTON'S HAIR | 36 |
| RONDEAU | 36 |
| TO CHARLES DICKENS | 37 |
| THE FISH, THE MAN AND THE SPIRIT | 37 |
| TO HAMPSTEAD | 40 |
| EPITAPH ON AN ENGLISHMAN | 41 |
| ESSAYS AND SKETCHES | 42 |
| WINDOWS | 43 |
| A 'NOW' (OF A HOT DAY) | 57 |
| A 'NOW' (OF A COLD DAY) | 61 |
| ON THE REALITIES OF THE IMAGINATION | 70 |
| SPRING AND DAISIES | 81 |
| DREAMS ON THE BORDERS OF THE LAND OF POETRY | 91 |

| | PAGE |
|--|------|
| DEATHS OF LITTLE CHILDREN | 102 |
| ON SEEING A PIGEON MAKE LOVE | 109 |
| WATCHMEN | 125 |
| ON THE GRACES AND ANXIETIES OF PIG-DRIVING | 136 |
| COACHES | 141 |
| STORIES | 176 |
| THE FAIR REVENGE | 177 |
| THE DAUGHTER OF HIPPOCRATES | 187 |
| THE SHOEMAKER OF VEYROS | 198 |
| THE HAMADRYAD | 206 |
| THE MOUNTAIN OF THE TWO LOVERS | 209 |
| CRITICISM | 215 |
| SPENCER | 216 |
| MARLOWE | 224 |
| COLERIDGE | 230 |
| SHELLEY | 238 |
| KEATS | 249 |
| DANTE | 255 |
| SWIFT | 267 |
| BUTLER | 269 |
| BIOGRAPHICAL AND AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL | 273 |
| BYRON | 274 |
| IMPRISONMENT | 281 |
| KEATS, LAMB AND COLERIDGE | 294 |
| SHELLEY'S END | 311 |
| THE <i>LIBERAL</i> AND LORD BYRON | 325 |

CONTENTS

vii

| | PAGE |
|---------------------------------|------|
| SHORTER EXTRACTS | 333 |
| AETNA | 334 |
| THE SIRENS | 336 |
| OF THE SIGHT OF SHOPS | 339 |
| RICHARDSON | 350 |
| ON BOOKS | 355 |
| GENIUS | 365 |
| TURKEYS | 366 |
| WOMANLY GALLANTRY | 367 |
| THE HOOP | 368 |
| DREAMS | 373 |
| ANGLING | 376 |
| SHAKING HANDS | 379 |
| A SHORT BIBLIOGRAPHY | 383 |
| ICONOGRAPHY | 394 |

INTRODUCTION

I

AMONG writers, there are some for whom the love of art is a quiet domestic emotion, not an awful and glorious passion. Side by side with the lady of their dreams they pass their lives in peaceful happiness, and the charms which hold them press neither on their spirits with anguish nor frame and shape them as the vessel of an unutterable delight. Art for them is not both Heaven and Hell in its own immediate workings, but only Heaven, and a Heaven less wonderful and resplendent for the absence of its sinister counterpart. One in some such case was Leigh Hunt, or to give him his full name, James Henry Leigh Hunt.

He was born on the nineteenth of October in the year 1784, at Southgate in Middlesex. His family came from the American continent, wanderers to the West, returned after years to the homeland, with an odd streak of Creole blood mixed somehow with the original English strain. His father was a jovial man of sanguine temperament, a Barbadian lawyer who practised in Philadelphia as well as in the colony. From him Leigh Hunt derived his careless and generous temperament,

his famous animal spirits, and the good intentions and unbounded optimism for which the family was noted.

His mother whose maiden name was Mary Shewell was a drooping gentle creature, 'with no accomplishments,' as her son says, 'but the two best of all, a love of nature, and a love of books.' She was a brunette with fine eyes, and it would seem, that Leigh Hunt took his physical qualities from his mother and his temperament from his father.

Politics was always an ill matter for the Hunt family to meddle with, and yet it had an almost irresistible fascination for them. Leigh Hunt's concern with it was to be the cause of two years' imprisonment when he came to be an effective publicist, and it was the means of driving his father from Philadelphia to Barbadoes and thence to London.

When he arrived in England, the colonial lawyer became a clergyman, with an adaptability worthy of the light-hearted genius of the family, but a world, ever afraid of and hostile to versatility, did not endorse this swift sacerdotalism, and ill-fortune came to the returned Colonials.

It was after the coming of his parents to London, that Leigh Hunt was born. His boyhood, always a delicate one, was passed among the fields and suburban pleasaunces near Southgate and Enfield. It may be, that it was here and in these days, that Hunt, mixing as no doubt he did in a motley kind of society, acquired that touch and impression of

Cockneyism which is occasionally discernible in him and his writings.

Here, too, he learnt the elements of that ragged but necessary philosophy which teaches how to smile at duns and distresses, which, garbing that most wretched joke of poverty in the comicalities of humour or the shadows of forgetfulness, preserves the serious attentions of serious but poor artists for serious concerns.

Before he was ten, Leigh went to Christ Hospital, and became a Bluecoat boy just at the time when Lamb and Coleridge — brother alumni — were leaving it for the world. During his school days, Hunt was regarded by the other boys as an incomprehensible fellow who evaded the usual categories of school-boy character: was neither bully nor coward, athletic hero nor sneak, whose virtues, if he had any, were not manifest—an aggravating characteristic which also applied to his shortcomings. He was sentimental and imaginative—most unmanly virtues, theoretically, in schoolboy etiquette, yet in their translation to action provocative, perhaps, of a queer kind of jealousy and admiration among simpler yet honest peers.

School life to such a one as Leigh Hunt is at the worst a brutal experience; at the best, a sad epitome of his artist's life to come, gone through without any of the bucklers and weapons of offence which experience and necessity provide.

From his college life Hunt was transplanted into an atmosphere almost too different and too congenial to his temper and habit of mind. He was made

free of the brotherhood of artists early in life. Men like Benjamin West and Fuseli, who were friends of the elder Hunt became his friends too, and exemplars in the business of shirking unnecessary and sometimes necessary mundane responsibilities which every artist must acquire.

He learnt from them and their like, no doubt, what would have later forced itself upon him : the terrible (and yet very natural and proper) indifference of the world to the high concerns of art and literature, which can only be compensated by a similar terrible (yet very natural and proper) indifference on the artist's part to the high concerns of worldliness.

A pleasant and sunny time this for the future Editor of the *Examiner*, full of gay dilletante hours, passed with books or in the studios or studies of his artistic and literary friends. Under a pretence of learning the law in his brother's office, Leigh Hunt learnt other things which pleased him better, and made himself free of the wonderlands of literature and poetry. Matters economic and financial stood at a rather better level for the Hunt family now. The father had some patronage and some means, and, when Leigh was writing his early verses, it was not as it had lately been, in an atmosphere and in days, passed; as he says, between 'placid readings and frightful knocks at the door.'

Juvenilia, the volume of early poems was published by subscription in 1802. The elder Hunt was very proud of his precocious literary son, and he exerted himself to the utmost in procuring subscribers

for the book. Among these, we find the names of Copley, Cosway, Fuseli, Hoppner, Lawrence, Cipriani, West, Pye the Laureate, William Gifford of the *Quarterly*, and the Earl of Guilford.

Juvenilia made a success, and reached a third edition within a year. Thus, before he was seventeen, Leigh Hunt strode the town as a successful author and a coming Man of Letters. Such fame is of course dangerous, but Leigh took it sanely enough, and it does not seem to have done him any harm. He soon assessed *Juvenilia* within some measure of its actual worth, which, of course, as poetry was very little, but, as clever imitation, extraordinary in so young a man.

Precocious in all things, our poet must now become affianced. Marianne Kent, a young woman who had been interested in his writings attracted him, and the young couple entered on their rather lengthy engagement. Influence and a desire for a secured income bought him a post in the War Office, and thus, before he was twenty, he presented the appearance of what is sometimes called 'a made man.' But journalism, his own temperament, and politics soon rescued him from any possible danger of a cramping routine. Almost the next thing we see is Hunt making his mark as a slashing and romantic theatrical critic in the columns of the *News*, a paper founded by his brother John. Here, his independence, insight and self-confidence won him an audience sufficiently pleased with these qualities to forgive the cocksure, rather impudent knowingness which accompanied them.

In the interval that elapsed between Hunt's marriage to Marianne Kent and his resignation of his post at the War Office in a rather grandiloquent letter, we find him engaged in writing plays and farces, and composing odd papers for the *Examiner*, with which he became associated as Editor on the demise of the *News*.

The year 1811 was a memorable one for the young poet and journalist, for it was then that Shelley, who was busy confounding Authority and outraging conventions at Oxford, wrote to the Editor of the *Examiner* submitting to him 'a scheme of mutual safety and of mutual indemnification for men of public spirit and principle, which, if carried into effect, would evidently be productive of incalculable advantages.' Hunt had, at this time, come safely through a political trial (the Scott trial) for too outspoken and revolutionary comments in the *Examiner*, and the publicity thereby given him had drawn Shelley to him with the powerful attraction of like for like. It was not till a little later, however, that the two became really intimate, an intimacy which Hunt has, I think, beautifully crystalised when he says in a letter to an anonymous correspondent:—'I love nature and books, and think well of the capabilities of human kind. I have known Shelley. I have known my mother.' In the simple finality of the phrase—'I have known Shelley,' there is something exquisite and rare.

We shall better appreciate the wit and the delicacy of mind so instantaneously and naturally

ready to understand Shelley, if we think of him, not as the secure poet of our days, but as the rather preposterous and even monstrous person that his contemporaries imagined him.

One cannot, however, it seems, enjoy the apparently quite worthless and unenjoyable applause of posterity without paying for it, nor can those whose selfishness takes the dangerous form of philanthropy proceed to try and do good to folk without earning their immediate ill-will, so Leigh Hunt, poet, journalist and reformer had in his turn to suffer for his advocacy of 'progressive' thought and deed.

The cause immediate was a libellous article on the Prince Regent which procured for its author two years' imprisonment, but for a long time Hunt's writings in the *Examiner* had been annoying the authorities.

While he was in prison, many of his colleagues came to visit him ; among others, Byron, Moore, Lamb, Hazlitt, Cowden Clarke, Bentham, and Shelley. His description of the time he passed under restraint makes one of the most interesting chapters of his always interesting *Autobiography*.

During the detention he worked at his plays and poems ; he read and studied much ; so he returned to literature and journalism with a firmer philosophy and a deeper culture. He went back to the *Examiner* unconvinced by the brutal argument of his governors whose wisdom he had doubted, but with a truer appreciation of their power. He lived after this episode more in literature and art than

before, not thinking politics a less knavish or clumsy thing but only a more inevitable.

The next few years of his life were passed quietly enough, troubled only by times of poverty and occasional fits of ill-health. He wrote during this period many of those miscellaneous essays and sketches wherein his butterfly talent is seen at its best.

In 1821, there commenced for him the rather unfortunate and even ridiculous Italian episode.

‘Put your music and your books on board a vessel,’ wrote his *friend of friends*, ‘and you will have no more trouble.’ So on November the fifteenth, 1821, he embarked for Italy and Shelley, on the brig *Jane*, with his wife and his seven children, his music and his books, including the famous *Parnasso Italiano* which seems to have accompanied him everywhere.

The founding and failure of the *Liberal*, the magazine that was to be carried on by Byron and Hunt in co-partnership and all the attendant circumstances, make an interesting, highly-debatable, and lengthy story.

Hunt arrived in Italy with no means or next to none, and looked to Byron to found the journal which was to make both their fortunes. With his carelessness in money matters, he seems to have taken it for granted that Byron would also finance him during the period preceding the advent of the journalistic fortune. It is well known that Byron did advance money to Hunt, though with no particular good grace, as, perhaps, was natural, for,

to a worldling like himself, the notion that a man could journey to a foreign land in a state of financial impotence and without any resources was unthinkable. It is, however, not so well known that he made Shelley security for most of the advances. The temperaments of the two literary partners were so antagonistic; their views on literature so distinct; their philosophy of life so different, that there was never much hope of a successful combination of their powers and talents. The *Liberal* expired at the fourth number, and, while its death was to Byron in the nature of a relief from a false position and an unfortunate speculation, to Leigh Hunt it meant the extinction of such prospects of an income as he then possessed.

When Shelley was drowned, the link which held with difficulty these two opposing natures together was broken, and relations between Byron and Hunt became more and more strained. This is not the place to estimate fully the rights and wrongs of the quarrel. Hunt foolishly placed himself at a disadvantage, and Byron was not generous enough to ignore it. If Hunt behaved like a sponger, then certainly Byron's part was neither more distinguished or noble. Whatever may be said of Byron's poetry, he was a proper man of the world, and when Hunt and he met on that superficial plane, poor Hunt would generally get the worst of it.

The most important literary result of the Italian episode in the case of Leigh Hunt was the production of *Lord Byron and some of his Contemporaries*,

a most entertaining book, whether one thinks it fair to Byron or not. The author deals in flashing phrase and lightning-like touches of insight such as we find but rarely in his other works. He regretted the book—what book for some reason or other does one not always afterwards regret?—in later years, and in his *Autobiography* he wrote of his old associate of the *Liberal* in phrases of the most gentle charity. Notwithstanding this, there is probably more of the true Byron in the earlier work—mixed doubtless with venom—than in the gentle tired wisdom of the second publication. Truth is so far and impossible a thing, yet so desirable to man, that he is more likely and liable to utter it when he is passionate than when he is chill, just as there is safety in moderation—and nothing else.

The other writings which occupied Leigh Hunt during his stay in Italy are not amongst his best. He was too much troubled in finding the means to support himself and his family to allow his pen to run very happily or freely. Towards the end of 1825, when the *Liberal* was dead and almost forgotten, Colburn, a London publisher, came to Hunt's assistance with an offer to provide the money for the journey to England in return for some manuscripts yet to be written. The stranded essayist was only too ready to accept the generous offer which must have cost the publisher a good sum, as the exiles amounted to nine in all.

When Leigh was established in London, his fortune bettered itself, and he was soon very busy in journalistic work that provided a sustenance, if

a precarious one. The rest of his life was passed quietly and peacefully enough as far as external incidents go. Poverty was always near him until the last decade or so of his career, and of bereavements and family troubles he also suffered his share. He was always the traditional literary man of the old times, liable to frequent changes of lodging, a prey to duns and debt, full of good intentions, short-lived economies and bursts of unwarrantable extravagance. He was a typical *littérateur* of the old style, as near to the Murger kind of thing as we have ever got in England, which is not very near, a Bohemian of real purpose and genuine talent, dressed in the ancient and doubtful livery of that merry-melancholy order.

Carlyle's description of him and his house is very vivid and acute:—‘A poetical tinkerdome,’ he says, ‘where the noble Hunt receives you in the spirit of a king, apologises for nothing, places you in the best seat, takes a window-sill himself, if there is no other, and then, folding closer his loose-flowing muslin cloud of a printed night-gown in which he always writes, commences the liveliest dialogue on philosophy and the prospects of man.’

Hunt's later years fell gently upon him. The shadows that wrapped in his life were kindly things, ghosts with tender hearts and fairy-gifts, like pensions and praises, in the folds of their gowns.

One pain he suffered in Dickens' *faux pas* over the *Harold Skimpole* incident, but though it hurt

him, he was not seriously affected by it. Dickens had, so he said, no notion that in adding to a not particularly pleasant literary character a few of Leigh Hunt's especial idiosyncracies, he was running the risk of a public confusion of mind and a charge of having caricatured his friend.

Leigh Hunt died on the 28th of August, 1859, in the seventy-fifth year of his age, honoured and respected by all his contemporaries.

II

To turn from Leigh Hunt's life to his work is to take but a little step, or rather, perhaps, to find ourselves in the very midst of it. For writers who are also artists only think of themselves as truly living when they are engaged in their sweet labour. And Hunt was genuinely an artist, a trifle pompous and insincere at times; marshalling his files and companies of words with half-conscious memories of the martinet Johnson and the drill-masters of the spent century, but a man of fine and delicate talent. A talent too fine, too delicate, perhaps, for such work as he mostly did and for the conventions under which he did it. There are things in Leigh Hunt more comparable to the work of an exquisite little master of French symbolism or the so-called decadence than to an Early Victorian writer. I find in him two distinct manners, or at least two manners that it may serve to distinguish, or one might say, two demons

or two fairies who inhabited him, and had, it would seem, their way with him in the most perplexingly rapid alternation. There is Leigh Hunt the nimble, fanciful, suggestive artist, and Leigh Hunt the weeping willow of sentimentality, the literary beanfeaster who learnt his cornet-playing from eighteenth century masters, so that he had a style at once classical and vulgar, riotous—yet chaste.

Something of this can be illustrated from a single paragraph of his writings.

Speaking of a fruiterer's shop in the essay on 'Shops' included in this selection of his writings, he pictures for us, beautifully enough, 'the apple, with its brown red cheek, as if it had slept in the sun . . . the thronging grapes, *like so many tight little bags of wine.*' The latter picture is delightful, but he goes on uncontent, like a man who must repeat a successful witticism, and gives us forced and mechanical phrases like 'the swelling pomp of melons—the elaborate elegance of walnuts.' He can lightly call the apples in his mother-in-law's garden his apples-in-law, and limp as lamely as 'the fruity plenitude of a tart,' or 'the cheese cake with its amenities of approach,' but a little further on. He can make us draw our breath at the subtlety and vividness of some of his strokes, and, ere we are recovered, check our enthusiasm with a bit of ready-made or a vulgar commonplace. We must think his inspiration a frail elusive thing, too fine almost for him that held it.

And yet how moving and magical Hunt can be,

how cleverly he can tilt the commonplace till it catches the light of truth from another angle and becomes radiant ! How well he can see what is just before his eyes—that most difficult of optical feats ! How childlike and unaffected are his whimsical fancies ! ‘The chillness of Spring, which,’ he says, ‘we love ; for it is the cold of a young hand, instead of an old one.’

How the phrase pleases us ! It is like an instant Spring, a douch of silver April. It makes us feel all the sweetness of youth, making us, if we are of it, deliciously aware of our power, and, if we have lost it, consoling us with the fragrance of its memory.

Here are others :—‘The quiet spirit of consciousness with which nature seems rewarded at the close of its day’s labours.’ A twilight impression this surely, as moving as anything of Corot or Rousseau. Again, ‘the moon, that is Homer’s and Shakespeare’s moon as well as the one we look at . . . the imprisoned butterfly beating frantically against a window-pane, as if some fine lady had gone mad against a ball-room door for not being let in. . . . Musical boxes, more like a peal of bodkins than bells.’ It is in such phrases as these, that we find Hunt’s true quality. He is, perhaps, at his best when he has before his mind a subject, good in itself which he will treat with his charming fancies and turns of wit. When he tells a story, he betrays his weaknesses. Useless, or almost then those little grace-notes, those rippling *diminuendoes*, that extremely personal *rubato*. Such things or

their literary equivalents must arise out of the work itself. One cannot arrange them round a piece of prescribed form. For Hunt's dramatic sense was not original or sensitive. Observe how he tells the fine story of *The Daughter of Hippocrates*. It is all on one plane, flat, rising up to such climax as he gives it too imperceptibly, to be either natural to life or art. It reads as though he knew everything about it before he set out to write it—a plan which is a direct denial of authorship, for all writing that is worth anything is exploration, and exciting exploration at that. If a writer knew exactly what he was going to say beforehand, he would be too bored to say it.

He only writes in order to discover a bit more of himself.

In essays of pure literature, Hunt can be very fine, especially in essays that are almost metaphysical, such as *The Borders of Poetry* and *On the Realities of the Imagination*. He is nearly always at his best in work such as this, or, as I have said, in a subject whimsical in itself, like *The Graces and Anxieties of Pig-driving*.

He has been called a sentimental writer, and so he certainly is at times, perhaps viciously so, as in parts of *The Deaths of Little Children*. He has very often an irritating cheerfulness, something like the determined gaiety of the commercial traveller, an impertinent optimism, which seems alternatively to patronise or explain away the benefits or shortcomings of the cosmos. Leigh Hunt is a romantic writer in the sense that he is an idealistic, hopeful,

magnificently credulous writer, recognising no limits to the moral, artistic, and intellectual dominion of man.

Hence what we call his wide and liberal views, then of course quite otherwise designated, his humanitarianism and desire of reform, then called dangerous and incendiary radicalism. But he was, we must remember, a revolutionary and a holder of advanced theories of civilisation before Society and literary men had 'taken up' mankind. Naïve or honest as it may please one to call him, a revolutionary in those times took himself and expected others to take him as such. One was not a Republican or a Socialist then, because it afforded a piquant and amusing contrast with such views and prejudices as, despite everything, one could not avoid preserving.

In the preface to Moxon's edition of Hunt's *Poetical Works* issued in 1849, the author pleads for Internationalism almost in the very words and along the lines of men like Jean Jaurès.

In all things literary he had a genius for sympathetic criticism that neither failure nor success could destroy. In his youth, he fought for Keats and Shelley; in his old age, he protested the qualities of Browning's verse, then in critical disfavour. To the rare, the delicate, the young and unapproved he had a generous susceptibility and the most frank and natural appreciation. A good fairy he of the literature of his time, a benign and amiable wizard, with a magic wand and a treasure-cave of his own, yet with a passion for neat critical

apropos (like the providential couplets of the pantomine variety) which should resolve the temporary distresses of the literary stage of his time.

A passion too for truth was his—ah, what a quest and desire!—which made folk turn to him in hatred or in love. No one can be ignored who has such a possibility in him of ultimate satisfaction for mankind. For every one is anxious to believe big things: the things which one can easily believe are so little. But we must gain our faith from a teacher, having so small an amount ourselves.

No such teacher of course, was Hunt: not one to set men's feet a-marching in a tramp which should echo over his tomb long years after his death. Only a little lieutenant he of the Grand Army, a gay captain with all the charm that comes from light responsibilities, and all the force to be gained from fighting under the banner of the Right. Such delegate the orders which they receive from commanders more austere and exalted than themselves: commanders, who by their very wisdom and authority, are incapable of direct communication with the rank and file.

And even heaven, it is said, has its noble and saintly janitors who lend a welcoming hand to the blest, and mediate with a dimmed radiancy, and, perhaps a far yet comforting reminiscence of earthliness, its ultimate surprise.

So Hunt for literature, as the captain for his general, the lover for the love which creates him,

the poet for the poetry of which he brings back to earth dim traces, and such heart-breaking protestations—a little fading star-dust, by virtue of which and the faith that is in him, he can—miracle of miracles!—make folk believe the all too much unproven wonders of his dreams.

CALENDAR OF PRINCIPAL EVENTS IN LEIGH HUNT'S LIFE

- 1784 Born, 19th October.
- 1792 Went to Christ's Hospital.
- 1799 Left school.
- 1801 Published *Juvenilia* by subscription.
- 1802 *Juvenilia* in 3rd edition.
- 1808 Began to edit the *Examiner*.
- 1809 Married Marianne Kent.
- 1811 Met Shelley.
- 1812 Published famous article in *Examiner*, for which, in
- 1813 He was sent to prison.
- 1815 Released from prison.
- 1816 Published *The Story of Rimini*.
- 1817 *The Round Table*.
- 1818 'Cockney School of Poets' article in *Blackwood*.
- 1821 Left England for Italy.
- 1822 Arrived in Italy.
- 1822 *The Liberal* (Verse and prose from the South) issued.
- 1823 *Ultra Crepidarius*, satire on William Gifford.
- 1825 Left Italy.
- 1828 *Lord Byron and Some of his Contemporaries*.
- 1832 *Christianism, or Belief and Unbelief Reconciled*.
- 1832 Preface to Shelley's *Masque of Anarchy* (Moxon's ed.)
- 1844 Received annuity of £120 from the Shelley family.
- 1846 *Wit and Humour*.
- 1846 *Stories from the Italian Poets*.
- 1847 *Men, Women, and Books*.
- 1847 Civil List Pension of £200 per annum allowed.
- 1848 *A Jar of Honey from Mount Hybla*.
- 1850 *The Autobiography*.
- 1855 *The Old Court Suburb*.
- 1859 Died at Putney, 28th August.

APPRECIATIONS AND TESTIMONIA

CHARLES LAMB

I look upon the author of *Rimini* as a man of taste and a poet. He is better than so; he is one of the most cordial-minded men I ever knew—a matchless fireside companion. I mean not to affront or wound your feelings when I say, that in his more genial moods, he has often reminded me of you. There is the same air of mild dogmatism—the same condescending to boyish sportiveness in both your conversations.—*Letter to Southey, 1823.*

TO MY FRIEND THE INDICATOR

Your easy essays indicate a flow,
Dear friend, of brain, which we may elsewhere seek;
And to their pages I, and hundreds, owe
That Wednesday is the sweetest of the week.
Such observation, wit, and sense, are shown,
We think the days of Bickerstaff returned;
And that a portion of that oil you own,
In his undying midnight lamp which burned.
I would not lightly bruise old Priscian's head,
Or wrong the rules of grammar understood;
But, with the leave of Priscian be it said,
The *Indicative* is your *Potential Mood*.
Wit, poet, prose-man, party-man, translator—
Hunt, your best title yet is *Indicator*.

CHARLES LAMB

SHELLEY

Had I known a person more highly endowed than yourself with all that it becomes a man to possess, I had selected for this work the ornament of his name. One more gentle, honourable, innocent, and brave; one of more exalted toleration for all who do and think evil, and yet himself more free from evil; one who knows better how to receive and how to confer a benefit, though he must ever confer far more than he can receive: one of simpler, and in the highest sense of the word of purer life and manners, I never knew, and I had already been fortunate in friendships when your name was added to the list.—From the *Dedication* to the *Cenci*.

KEATS

Glory and loveliness have passed away ;
 For if we wander out in early morn,
 No wreathèd incense do we see upborne
 Into the east, to meet the smiling day :
 No crowd of nymphs, soft voiced, and young, and gay,
 In woven baskets bringing ears of corn,
 Roses, and pinks, and violets, to adorn
 The shrine of Flora in her early May.
 But there are left delights as high as these,
 And I shall ever bless my destiny,
 That in a time when under pleasant trees
 Pan is no longer sought, I feel a free,
 A leafy luxury, seeing I could please,
 With these poor offerings, a man like thee.

The Dedication to Keats' Poems, 1817.

WILLIAM HAZLITT

To my taste, the author of *Rimini* and editor of the *Examiner* is among the best and least corrupted of our

poetical prose-writers. In his light but well-supported columns, we find the raciness, the sharpness, and sparkling effect of poetry, with little that is extravagant or far-fetched, and no turgidity or pompous pretension. Perhaps there is too much the appearance of relaxation and trifling (as if he had escaped the shackles of rhyme), a caprice, a levity, and a disposition to innovate in words and ideas. Still the genuine master-spirit of the prose-writer is there; the tone of lively, sensible conversation; and this may in part arise from the author's being himself an animated talker.—*The Plain Speaker: On the Prose Style of Poets*, 1826.

He is the only poet or literary man we ever knew who puts us in mind of Sir John Suckling, or Killigrew, or Carew; or who united rare intellectual acquirements with outward grace and natural gentility.—*The Spirit of the Age*, 1825.

LORD MACAULAY

We have a kindness for Mr Leigh Hunt. We form our judgment of him, indeed, only from events of universal notoriety, from his own works, and from the works of other writers, who have generally abused him in the most rancorous manner. But, unless we are greatly mistaken, he is a very clever, a very honest, and a very good-hearted man. We can clearly discern together with many merits, many faults both in his writings and in his conduct. But we really think that there is hardly a man living whose merits have been so grudgingly allowed, and whose faults have been so cruelly expiated. We do not always agree with his literary judgments; but we find in him what is very rare in our time, the power of justly appreciating and heartily enjoying good things of very different kinds.—In the *Edinburgh Review*, 1840.

CARLYLE

A man of the most indisputably superior worth ; a *Man of Genius* in a very strict sense of that word, and in all the senses which it bears or implies ; of brilliant gifts, of graceful fertility, of clearness, lovingness, truthfulness ; of childlike open character ; also of most pure, and even exemplary private deportment.

NATHANIEL HAWTHORNE

. . . I have said that he was a beautiful old man. In truth, I never saw a finer countenance, either as to the mould of features or the expression, nor any that showed the play of feeling so perfectly without the slightest theatrical emphasis. It was like a child's face in this respect. . . . But when he began to speak, and as he grew more earnest in conversation, I ceased to be sensible of his age ; sometimes, indeed, its dusky shadow darkened through the gleam which his sprightly thoughts diffused about his face, but then another flash of youth came out of his eyes and made an illumination again. . . . His figure was full of gentle movement, though, somehow, without disturbing its quietude. . . . There was not an English trait in him from head to foot, morally, intellectually, or physically.—In *Our Old Home*.

W. J. Fox

Companionship is the constant sensation that we have in Leigh Hunt's writings. He does not come out in state ; he does not appear as a deity used in the old plays, just to cut the knot and bring about the catastrophe . . . he does not present himself in merely his singing robes to chant his lay, and then to be seen no longer ; but he walks with us, talks with us, sits with us, eats with us, drinks with us, and reads with us.—*Lectures*.

DOUGLAS JERROLD

If Goldsmith could touch nothing but what he adorned, it may be said of Leigh Hunt, that he touches nothing without extracting beauty from it, and without imparting a sense of it to his readers.

BYRON

Hunt is an extraordinary character, and not exactly of the present age. He reminds me more of the Pym and Hampden times—much talent, great independence of spirit, and an austere, yet not repulsive aspect. If he goes on, *qualis ab incepto*, I know few men who will deserve more praise or obtain it. He is a man worth knowing.—In 1813.

DICKENS

One of the completest specimens of the almost extinct literary man in the most rigorous sense of the expression, was Leigh Hunt. He passed the seventy-five years of his life in a region of literary works, journeying from land to land in that immortal territory, with all the enthusiasm and ever fresh wonder and delight of the old travellers in the marvel-haunted East . . . a man who had the courage to take his stand against power on behalf of light,—who never bartered his opinion or betrayed his friend.—In *All the Year Round*, April 12, 1862.

JAMES RUSSELL LOWELL

No man has ever understood the delicacies and luxuries of language better than he; and his thoughts often have all the rounded grace and shifting lustre of a dove's neck.

POETRY

ABOU BEN ADHEM

ABOU BEN ADHEM (may his tribe increase !)
Awoke one night from a deep dream of peace,
And saw, within the moonlight in his room,
Making it rich, and like a lily in bloom,
An angel writing in a book of gold :—
Exceeding peace had made Ben Adhem bold,
And to the presence in the room he said,
'What writest thou?'—The vision raised its
head,
And with a look made of all sweet accord,
Answer'd, 'The names of those who love
the Lord.'
'And is mine one?' said Abou. 'Nay, not so,'
Replied the angel. Abu spoke more low,
But cheerly still; and said, 'I pray thee then,
Write me as one that loves his fellowmen.'

The angel wrote and vanish'd. The next
night
It came again with a great wakening light,
And show'd the names whom love of God
had bless'd,
And lo! Ben Adhem's name led all the rest.

THE NILE

[Perhaps Hunt's best sonnet. The simile in the second line has a dignity and picturesque beauty to which he did not often attain.]

It flows through old hush'd Egypt and its
sands,
Like some grave mighty thought threading
a dream,
And times and things, as in that vision,
seem
Keeping along it their eternal stands,—
Caves, pillars, pyramids, the shepherd bands
That roamed through the young world,
the glory extreme
Of high Sesostriis, and that southern beam,
The laughing queen that caught the world's
great hands.

Then comes a mightier silence, stern and
strong,
As of a world left empty of its throng,
And the void weighs on us ; and then we
wake,
And hear the fruitful stream lapsing along
'Twixt villages, and think how we shall
take
Our own calm journey on for human sake.

TO THE GRASSHOPPER AND THE CRICKET

[Written in friendly rivalry with Keats on the set theme of 'The Grasshopper.' In treating a trivial subject such as this Leigh Hunt's light touch was more to the point than Keats' graver manner. Keats opened his sonnet with a fine note, but one more suitable for an Epic of ten thousand lines than a little poem on the Grasshopper. It began: 'The poetry of earth is never dead.']

GREEN little vaulter in the sunny grass,
Catching your heart up at the feel of June,
Sole voice that's heard amidst the lazy noon,
When even the bees lag at the summoning brass

And you, warm little housekeeper, who class,
With those who think the candles come
too soon,
Loving the fire, and with your tricksome
tune

Nick the glad silent moments as they pass ;

Oh sweet and tiny cousins, that belong,
One to the fields, the other to the hearth,
Both have your sunshine ; both, though
small, are strong

At your clear hearts ; and both seem given
to earth

To ring in thoughtful ears this natural song—
In doors and out, summer and winter,
Mirth.

December 30th, 1816.

ON A LOCK OF MILTON'S HAIR

It lies before me there, and my own breath
 Stirs its thin outer threads, as though
 beside

The living head I stood in honour'd pride,
 Talking of lovely things that conquer death.
 Perhaps he press'd it once, or underneath
 Ran his fine fingers, when he leant, blank-
 eyed,

And saw, in fancy Adam and his bride
 With their rich locks, or his own Delphic
 wreath.

There seems a love in hair, though it be dead.
 It is the gentlest, yet the strongest thread

Of our frail plant,—a blossom from the tree
 Surviving the proud trunk ;—as though it said
 Patience and Gentleness is Power. In me
 Behold affectionate eternity.

RONDEAU

JENNY kiss'd me when we met,
 Jumping from the chair she sat in ;
 Time, you thief, who love to get
 Sweets into your list, put that in :
 Say I'm weary, say I'm sad,
 Say that health and wealth have miss'd me,
 Say I'm growing old, but add,
 Jenny kiss'd me.

TO CHARLES DICKENS

As when a friend (himself in music's list)
Stands by some rare, full-handed organist,
And glorying as he sees the master roll
The surging sweets through all their depths
of soul,
Cannot, encouraged by his smile, forbear
With his own hand to join them here and
there ;
And so, if little, yet add something more
To the sound's volume and the golden roar ;
So I, dear friend, Charles Dickens, though
thy hand
Needs but itself, to charm from land to land,
Make bold to join in summoning men's ears
To this thy new-found music of our spheres,
In hopes that by thy Household Words and
thee
The world may haste to days of harmony.

THE FISH, THE MAN, AND THE SPIRIT

TO FISH

You strange, astonish'd-looking, angle-faced,
Dreary-mouth'd gaping wretches of the
sea,
Gulping salt-water everlastingly,
Cold-blooded, though with red your blood
be graced,

And mute, though dwellers in the roaring
waste ;

And you, all shapes beside, that fishy be,—
Some round, some fat, some long, all
devilry,

Legless, unloving, infamously chaste :—

O scaly, slippery, wet, swift, staring wights,
What is't ye do ? what life lead ? eh, dull
goggles ?

How do ye vary your vile days and nights ?
How pass your Sundays ? Are ye still
but joggles

In ceaseless wash ? Still nought but gapes
and bites,
And drinks and stares diversified with
boggles ?

A FISH ANSWERS

Amazing monster ! that, for ought I know,
With the first sight of thee didst make
our race

For ever stare ! O flat and shocking face,
Grimly divided from the breast below !

Thou that on dry land horribly dost go
With a split body and most ridiculous pace,
Prong after prong, disgracer of all grace,
Long-useless-limb'd, hair'd, upright, unwet,
slow !

O breather of unbreathable, sword-sharp air,
How canst exist ? How bear thyself, thou
dry
And dreary sloth. What particle canst share
Of the only blessed life, the watery ?
I sometimes see of ye an actual *pair*
Go by ! link'd fin by fin ! most odiously.

*The Fish turns into a Man, and then into a
Spirit, and again speaks*

Indulge thy smiling scorn, if smiling still,
O man ! and loathe, but with a sort of
love ;
For difference must its use by difference
prove,
And, in sweet clang, the spheres with music
fill.
One of the spirits am I, that at his will
Live in whate'er has life—fish, eagle,
dove—
No hate, no pride, beneath nought, nor
above,
A visitor of the rounds of God's sweet skill.
Man's life is warm, glad, sad, 'twixt loves
and graves,
Boundless in hope, honour'd with pangs
austere,

Heaven-gazing ; and his angel-wings he
 craves ;
 The fish is swift, small-needing, vague yet
 clear,
A cold, sweet, silver life, wrapp'd in round
 waves,
 Quicken'd with touches of transporting
 fear.

TO HAMPSTEAD

[Written during the author's imprisonment, August
1813]

SWEET upland, to whose walks, with fond
 repair,
 Out of thy western slope I took my rise
 Day after day, and on these feverish eyes
Met the moist fingers of the bathing air ;—
If health, unearn'd of thee, I may not share,
 Keep it, I pray thee, where my memory
 lies,
 In thy green lanes, brown dells, and breezy
 skies,
Till I return, and find thee doubly fair.
Wait then my coming, on that lightsome
 land,
 Health, and the joy that out of nature
 springs,
And Freedom's air-blown locks ;—but stay
 with me,

Friendship, frank entering with the cordial
 hand,
 And Honour, and the muse with grow-
 ing wings,
 And Love Domestic, smiling equably.

EPITAPH ON AN ENGLISHMAN

(From *Destouches*)

HERE lies Sir John Plumpudding of the
 Grange,
 Who hung himself one morning for a
 change.*

* The original runs as follows :

*‘Ci-gît Jean Rosbif, écuyer,
 Qui se pendit pour se désennuyer.’*

ESSAYS AND SKETCHES

It is in essays and sketches that Leigh Hunt is at his best. The rigours and necessities of form are not so apparent, though not less real in this kind of work, as in drama, fiction or poetry. A little more or a little less is not a question of such immediate importance. The very title—essay—disarms the philosophic critic. It is something that one attempts but does not quite manage—perhaps? Yet within the limits of an accomodating though elusive technique, Hunt wrote some of the best things of his own time.

Most of the following pieces first appeared in the various periodicals with which their author was connected, either as editor or contributor: the *Indicator*, *The Examiner*, *The London Journal*, *The Companion*, etc.

The original source of each piece is here indicated. The two essays *Windows* and *A 'Now'* were republished in Hunt's lifetime in the pages of *The Seer*, from the preface to which the following characteristic note is quoted:—

[‘Given,’ writes the essayist, ‘at our suburban abode, with a fire on one side of us, and a vine at the window on the other, this nineteenth day of October, 1840, and in the very green and invincible year of our life, the fifty-sixth.—*L. H.*’]

WINDOWS

[From the *Seer*, 1840]

THE other day a butterfly came into our room and began beating himself against the upper panes of our window half open, thinking to get back. It is a nice point—relieving your butterfly—he is a creature so delicate. If you handle him without ceremony, you bring away on your fingers something which you take to be down, but which is plumes of feathers ; and as there are no fairies at hand, two atoms high, to make pens of the quills, and write ‘articles’ on the invisible, there would be a loss. Mr Bentham’s ghost would visit us, shaking his venerable locks at such unnecessary-pain-producing and reasonable-pleasure-preventing heedlessness. Then if you brush him downwards, you stand a chance of hurting his antennæ, or feelers, and of not knowing what mischief you may do to his eyes, or his sense of touch, or his instruments of dialogue ; for some philosophers hold that insects talk with their feelers as dumb people do with their fingers. However, some suffering must be hazarded in order to prevent worse, even to the least and most delicate of heaven’s creatures, who

would not know pleasure if they did not know pain ; and perhaps the merrier and happier they are in general, the greater the lumps of pain they can bear. Besides, all must have their share, or how would the burden of the great blockish necessity be equally distributed : and finally, what business had little Papilio to come into a place unfit for him, and get bothering himself with glass ? Oh, faith !—your butterfly must learn experience, as well as your Buonaparte.

There was he, beating, fluttering, flouncing, —wondering that he could not get through so clear a matter (for so glass appears to be to insects as well as to men), and tearing his silken little soul out with ineffectual energy. What plumage he must have left upon the pane ! What feathers and colours, strewed about, as if some fine lady had gone mad against a ball-room door, for not being let in !

But we had a higher simile for him than that. ‘Truly,’ thought we, ‘little friend, thou art like some of the great German transcendentalists, who, in thinking to reach at heaven by an impossible way (such at least it seemeth at present), run the hazard of cracking their brains, and spoiling their

wings for ever ; whereas, if thou and they would but stoop a little lower, and begin with earth first, there, before thee, lieth open heaven as well as earth ; and thou mayest mount high as thou wilt, after thy own happy fashion, thinking less and enjoying all things.'

And hereupon we contrived to get him downwards,—and forth out into the air sprang he,—first against the lime-trees, and then over them into the blue ether,—as if he had resolved to put our advice into practice.

We have before spoken of the fret and fury into which the common fly seems to put himself against a window. Bees appear to take it more patiently, out of a greater knowledge ; and slip about with a strange air of hopelessness. They seem to 'give it up.' These things, as Mr Pepys said of the humanities at court, 'it is pretty to observe.' Glass itself is a phenomenon that might alone serve a reflecting observer with meditation for a whole morning,—so substantial and yet so air-like, so close and compact to keep away the cold, yet so transparent and facile to let in light, the gentlest of all things,—so palpably *something*, and yet to the eye and the perceptions a kind of *nothing* ! It seems

absolutely to deceive insects in this respect, which is remarkable, considering how closely they handle it, and what microscopic eyes we suppose them to have. We should doubt (as we used to do) whether we did not mistake their ideas on the subject, if we had not so often seen their repeated dashings of themselves against the panes, their stoppings (as if to take breath), and then their recommencement of the same violence. It is difficult to suppose that they do this for mere pleasure, for it looks as if they must hurt themselves. Observe in particular the tremendous thumps given himself by that great hulking fellow of a fly, that Ajax of the Diptera, the blue-bottle. Yet in autumn, in their old age, flies congregate in windows, as elsewhere, and will take the matter so quietly as sometimes to stand still for hours together. We suppose they love the warmth, or the light; and that either they have found out the secret as to the rest, or

Years have brought the philosophic mind.

Why should Fly plague himself any longer with household matters which he cannot alter? He has tried hard in his time; and now he resigns himself like a wise insect,

and will taste whatsoever tranquil pleasures remain for him, without beating his brains or losing his temper any longer. In natural livers, pleasure survives pain. Even the artificial, who keep up their troubles so long by pride, self-will, and the want of stimulants, contrive to get more pleasure than is supposed out of pain itself, especially by means of thinking themselves ill-used, and of grumbling. If the heart (for want of better training) does not much keep up its action with them, the spleen does ; and so there is action of some sort : and whenever there is action, there is life ; and life is found to have something valuable in it for its own sake, apart from ordinary considerations either of pain or pleasure. But your fly and your philosopher are for pleasure too, to the last, if it be harmless. Give old *Musca* a grain of sugar, and see how he will put down his proboscis to it, and dot, and pound, and suck it in, and be as happy as an old West India gentleman pondering on his sugar cane, and extracting a pleasure out of some dulcet recollection.

Gamblers, for want of a sensation, have been known to start up from their wine, and lay a bet upon two rain-drops coming down a pane of glass. How poor are those gentry,

even when they win, compared with observers whose resources need never fail them ! To the latter, if they please, the rain-drop itself is a world,—a world of beauty and mystery and aboriginal idea, bringing before them a thousand images of proportion, and reflection and the elements, and light and colour, and roundness, and delicacy, and fluency, and beneficence, and the refreshed flowers, and the growing corn, and dew-drops on the bushes, and the tears that fall from gentle eyes, and the ocean and the rainbow; and the origin of all things. In water we behold one of the old primeval mysteries of which the world was made. Thus, the commonest rain-drop on a pane of glass becomes a visitor from the solitudes of time.

A window, to those who have read a little in Nature's school, thus becomes a book, or a picture, on which her genius may be studied, handicraft, though the canvas be, and little as the glazier may have thought of it. Not that we are to predicate ignorance of your glazier now-a-days, any more than of other classes that compose the various readers of penny and three-half-penny philosophy,—cheap visitor, like the sunbeams, of houses of all sorts. The glazier could probably give many a richer man

information respecting his glass, and his diamond, and his putty (no anticlimax in these analytical days), and let him into a secret or two, besides, respecting the amusement to be derived from it. (We have just got up from our work to inform ourselves of the nature and properties of the said mystery, putty ; and should blush for the confession, if the blush would not imply that a similar ignorance were less common with us than it is.)

But a window is a frame for other pictures besides its own ; sometimes for moving ones, as in the instance of a cloud going along, or a bird, or a flash of lightning ; sometimes for the distant landscape, sometimes the nearer one, or the trees that are close to it, with their lights and shades ; often for the passing multitude. A picture, a harmony, is observable, even in the drapery of the curtains that invest it ; much more in the sunny vine-leaves or roses that may be visible on the borders, or that are trailed against it, and which render many a poor casement so pleasant. The other day, in a very humble cottage window in the suburbs, we saw that beautiful plant, the nasturtium, trained over it on several strings ; which

must have furnished the inmates with a screen as they sate at their work or at their tea inside, and at the same time permitted them to see through into the road, thus constituting a far better blind than is to be found in many great houses. Sights like these give a favourable impression of the dispositions and habits of the people within,—show how superior they are to their sophistications, if rich, and how possessed of natural refinement, if among the poorer classes. Oh! the human mind is a fine graceful thing everywhere, if the music of nature does but seize its attention, and throw it into its natural attitude. But so little has the ‘schoolmaster’ yet got hold of this point, or made way with it, and so occupied are men with digging gold out of the ground, and neglecting the other treasures which they toss about in profusion during the operation (as if the clay were better than the flowers which it produced), that few make the most of the means and appliances for enjoyment that lie round about them, even in their very walls and rooms. Look at the windows down a street, and generally speaking they are all barren. The inmates might see through roses and geraniums, if they would; but they do not think of it,

or not with loving knowledge enough to take the trouble. Those who have the advantage of living in the country or the suburbs, are led in many instances to do better, though their necessity for agreeable sights is not so great. But the presence of nature tempts them to imitate her. There are few windows anywhere which might not be used to better advantage than they are, if we have a little money, or can procure even a few seeds. We have read an art of blowing the fire. There is an art even in the shutting and opening of windows. People might close them more against dull objects, and open them more to pleasant ones, and to the air. For a few pence they might have beautiful colours and odours, and a pleasing task, emulous of the showers of April, beneficent as May ; for they who cultivate flowers in their windows (as we have hinted before) are led instinctively to cultivate them for others as well as themselves ; nay, in one respect they do it more so ; for you may observe that wherever there is this ‘fenestral horticulture’ (as Evelyn would have called your window-gardening), the flowers are turned with their faces towards the street.

But 'there is an art in the shutting and opening of windows.'—Yes, for the sake of air (which ought to be had night as well as day, in reasonable measure, and with precautions), and for the sake of excluding, or admitting, what is to be seen out of doors. Suppose, for example, a house is partly opposite some pleasant, and partly some unpleasant, object ; the one a tree or garden ; the other a gin-shop or a squalid lane. The sight of the first should be admitted as constantly as possible, and with open window. That of the other, if you are rich enough, can be shut out with a painted blind, that shall substitute a beautiful landscape for the nuisance, or a blind of another sort will serve the purpose ; or if even a blind cannot be afforded, the shutters may be partly closed. Shutters should always be divided in two, horizontally, as well as otherwise, for purposes of this kind. It is sometimes pleasant to close the lower portion, if only to preserve a greater sense of quiet and seclusion, and to read or write the more to yourself ; light from above having both a softer and stronger effect than when admitted from all quarters. We have seen shutters, by judicious management in this way, in the house of a poor man who had a taste for nature, contribute

to the comfort and even elegance of a room in a surprising manner, and (by the opening of the lower portions and the closure of the upper) at once shut out all the sun that was not wanted, and convert a row of stunted trees into an appearance of interminable foliage, as thick as if it had been in a forest.

‘But the *fact* was otherwise’; cries some fastidious personage, more nice than wise; ‘you knew there was *no forest*, and therefore could not have been deceived.’

‘Well, my dear sir, but deception is not necessary to everyone’s pleasure; and *fact* is not merely what you take it for. The fact of there being no forest might have been the only fact with yourself, and so have prevented the enjoyment; but to a livelier fancy there would have been the fact of the imagination, of the forest (for everything is a fact which *does* anything for us), and there would also have been the fact of having cultivated the imagination, and the fact of our willingness to be pleased, and the fact of the books we have read, and above all, the fact of the positive satisfaction. If a man be pleased, it is in vain you tell him he has no cause to be pleased. The cause

is proved by the consequence. Whether the cause be rightly or wrongly cultivated is another matter. The good of it is assumed in the present instance ; and it would take more facts than are in the possession of a 'mere matter-of-fact man' to disprove it. Matter of fact and spirit of fact must both be appreciated, in order to do justice to the riches of nature. We are made of mind as well as body,—of imagination as well as senses. The same mysterious faculty which sees what is before the eyes, sees also what is suggested to the memory. Matter of fact is only the more palpable world, around which a thousand spirits of fact are playing, like angels in a picture. Not to see both is to be a poor unattended creature, who walks about in the world conscious of nothing but himself, or at best of what the horse-jockey and the coach-maker have done for him. If his banker fails, he is ruined ! Not so those who, in addition to the resources of their industry, have stock in all the *banks* of nature and art (pardon us this pun for the sake of what grows on it), and whose consolations cannot wholly fail them, as long as they have a flower to look upon, and a blood not entirely vitiated,

A window high up in a building, and commanding a fine prospect, is a sort of looking out of the air, and gives a sense of power, and of superiority to earth. The higher also you go, the healthier. We speak of such windows as Milton fancied, when he wished that his lamp should be seen at midnight in 'some high lonely tower'; a passage justly admired for the good-nature as well as loftiness of the wish, thus desiring that wayfarers should be the better for his studies, and enjoy the evidence of their fellow-creature's vigils. But elevations of this kind are not readily to be had. As to health, we believe that a very little lift above the ground floor, and so on as you ascend, grows healthier in proportion. *Malaria* (bad air) in the countries where a plague of that kind is prevalent, is understood to be confined to a certain distance from the earth; and we really believe, that even in the healthiest quarters, where no positive harm is done by nearness to it, the air is better as the houses ascend, and a seat in a window becomes valuable in proportion. By-and-by, perhaps, studies and other favourite sitting-rooms will be built accordingly; and more retrospective reverence be shown to the 'garrets' that used to be so famous in the

annals of authorship. The poor poet in Pope, who lay

high in Drury Lane,

Lull'd by soft zephyrs through the broken pane,

was better off there than if he had occupied the ground-floor. For our part, in order that we may save the dignity of our three-half-penny meditations, and at the same time give evidence of practising what we preach, we shall finish by stating, that we have written this article in a floor neither high enough to be so poetical, nor low enough for too earthly a prose,—in a little study made healthy by an open window, and partly screened from overlookers by a bit of the shutter, while our look-out presents us with a world of green leaves, and a red cottage top, a gothic tower of a church in the distance, and a glorious apple-tree close at hand, laden with its yellow balls.

Studded with apples, a beautiful show.

Some kindness of this sort Fortune has never failed to preserve to us, as if in return for the love we bear to her rolling globe ; and now that the sincerity of our good-will has become known, none seem inclined to grudge it us, or to dispute the account to which we may turn it, for others as well as ourselves.

A 'NOW'

Descriptive of a Hot Day

[From the *Indicator*, 1820. This piece was Keats' favourite among Leigh Hunt's essays]

Now the rosy- (and lazy-) fingered Aurora, issuing from her saffron house, calls up the moist vapours to surround her, and goes veiled with them as long as she can ; till Phœbus, coming forth in his power, looks everything out of the sky, and holds sharp, uninterrupted empire from his throne of beams. Now the mower begins to make his sweeping cuts more slowly, and resorts oftener to the beer. Now the carter sleeps a-top of his load of hay, or plods with double slouch of shoulder, looking out with eyes winking under his shading hat, and with a hitch upward of one side of his mouth. Now the little girl at her grandmother's cottage-door watches the coaches that go by, with her hand held up over her sunny forehead. Now labourers look well resting in their white shirts at the doors of rural ale-houses. Now an elm is fine there, with a seat under it ; and horses drink out of the trough, stretching their yearning necks with loosened collars ; and the traveller calls for his glass of ale, having been without one for more than ten minutes ; and his horse stands

wincing at the flies, giving sharp shivers of his skin, and moving to and fro his ineffectual docked tail ; and now Miss Betty Wilson, the host's daughter, comes streaming forth in a flowered gown, and ear-rings, carrying with four of her beautiful fingers the foaming glass, for which, after the traveller has drank it, she receives with an indifferent eye, looking another way, the lawful twopence. Now grasshoppers 'fry,' as Dryden says. Now cattle stand in water, and ducks are envied. Now boots, and shoes, and trees by the road-side, are thick with dust ; and dogs, rolling in it, after issuing out of the water, into which they have been thrown to fetch sticks, come scattering horror among the legs of the spectators. Now a fellow who finds he has three miles further to go in a pair of tight shoes is in a pretty situation. Now rooms with the sun upon them become intolerable ; and the apothecary's apprentice, with a bitterness beyond aloes, thinks of the pond he used to bathe in at school. Now men with powdered heads (especially if thick) envy those that are unpowdered, and stop to wipe them up hill, with countenances that seem to expostulate with destiny. Now boys assemble round the village pump with

a ladle to it, and delight to make a forbidden splash and get wet through the shoes. Now also they make suckers of leather, and bathe all day long in rivers and ponds, and make mighty fishings for 'tittle-bats.' Now the bee, as he hums along, seems to be talking heavily of the heat. Now doors and brick-walls are burning to the hand; and a walled lane, with dust and broken bottles in it, near a brick-field, is a thing not to be thought of. Now a green lane, on the contrary, thick-set with hedgerow elms, and having the noise of a brook 'rumbling in pebble-stone,' is one of the pleasantest things in the world.

Now, in town, gossips talk more than ever to one another, in rooms, in door-ways, and out of window, always beginning the conversation with saying that the heat is overpowering. Now blinds are let down, and doors thrown open, and flannel waist-coats left off, and cold meat preferred to hot, and wonder expressed why tea continues so refreshing, and people delight to sliver lettuces into bowls, and apprentices water door-ways with tin canisters that lay several atoms of dust. Now the water-cart, jumbling along the middle of the street, and jolting the showers out of its box of water, really

does something. Now fruiterers' shops and dairies look pleasant, and ices are the only things to those who can get them. Now ladies loiter in baths ; and people make presents of flowers ; and wine is put into ice ; and the after-dinner lounge recreates his head with applications of perfumed water out of long-necked bottles. Now the lounge, who cannot resist riding his new horse, feels his boots burn him. Now buck-skins are not the lawn of Cos. Now jockeys, walking in great-coats to lose flesh, curse inwardly. Now five fat people in a stage-coach hate the sixth fat one who is coming in, and think he has no right to be so large. Now clerks in office do nothing but drink soda-water and spruce-beer, and read the newspaper. Now the old-clothesman drops his solitary cry more deeply into the areas on the hot and forsaken side of the street ; and bakers look vicious ; and cooks are aggravated ; and the steam of a tavern-kitchen catches hold of us like the breath of Tartarus. Now delicate skins are beset with gnats ; and boys make their sleeping companion start up, with playing a burning-glass on his hand ; and blacksmiths are super-carbonated ; and cobblers in their stalls almost feel a wish to be transplanted ;

and butter is too easy to spread ; and the dragoons wonder whether the Romans liked their helmets ; and old ladies, with their lappets unpinned, walk along in a state of dilapidation ; and the servant maids are afraid they look vulgarly hot ; and the author, who has a plate of strawberries brought him, finds that he has come to the end of his writing.

A 'NOW'

Descriptive of a Cold Day

Now, all amid the rigours of the year.—THOMSON.

[First published in the *London Journal* ; reprinted
in the *Seer*, 1840]

A FRIEND tells us, that having written a 'Now,' descriptive of a hot day, we ought to write another, descriptive of a cold one ; and accordingly we do so. It happens that we are, at this minute, in a state at once fit and unfit for the task, being in the condition of the little boy at school, who, when asked the Latin for 'cold,' said he had it 'at his fingers' ends' ; but this helps us to set off with a right taste of our subject ; and the fire, which is clicking in our ear, shall soon enable us to handle it comfortably in other respects.

Now, then, to commence.—But first, the reader who is good-natured enough to have a regard for these papers, may choose to be told of the origin of the use of this word *Now*, in case he is not already acquainted with it. It was suggested to us by the striking convenience it affords to descriptive writers, such as Thomson and others, who are fond of beginning their paragraphs with it, thereby saving themselves a world of trouble in bringing about a nicer conjunction of the various parts of their subject.

Now when the first foul torrent of the brooks—

Now flaming up to heaven the potent sun—

Now when the cheerless empire of the sky—

But now—

When now—

Where now—

For now—etc.

We say nothing of similar words among other nations, or of a certain *But* of the Greeks which was as useful to them on all occasions as the *And so* of the little children's stories. Our business is with our old indigenous friend. No other *Now* can be so present, so instantaneous, so extremely

Now, as our own *Now*. The now of the Latins—*Nunc*, or *Jam*, as he sometimes calls himself—is a fellow of past ages. He is no now. And the *Nun* of the Greek is older. How can there be a *Now* which was *Then*? a '*Now-then*,' as we sometimes barbarously phrase it. '*Now and then*' is intelligible; but '*Now-then*' is an extravagance, fit only for the delicious moments of a gentleman about to crack his bottle, or to run away with a lady, or to open a dance, or to carve a turkey and chine, or to pelt snowballs, or to commit some other piece of ultra-vivacity, such as excuses a man from the nicer proprieties of language.

But to begin.

Now the moment people wake in the morning they perceive the coldness with their faces, though they are warm with their bodies, and exclaim '*Here's a day!*' and pity the poor little sweep, and the boy with the water-cresses. How anybody can go to a cold ditch, and gather water-cresses, seems marvellous. Perhaps we hear great lumps in the street of something falling; and, looking through the window, perceive the roofs of the neighbouring houses thick with snow. The breath is visible, issuing from the mouth as we lie. Now we hate getting

up, and hate shaving, and hate the empty grate in one's bed-room ; and water freezes in ewers, and you may set the towel upright on its own hardness, and the window panes are frost-whitened, or it is foggy, and the sun sends a dull brazen beam into one's room ; or, if it is fine, the windows outside are stuck with icicles ; or a detestable thaw has begun, and they drip ; but, at all events, it is horribly cold, and delicate shavers fidget about their chambers, looking distressed, and cherish their hard-hearted enemy, the razor, in their bosoms, to warm him a little, and coax him into a consideration of their chins. Savage is a cut, and makes them think destiny really too hard.

Now breakfast is fine ; and the fire seems to laugh at us as we enter the breakfast-room, and say, ' Ha ! ha ! here's a better room than the bed-chamber ! ' and we always poke it before we do anything else ; and people grow selfish about seats near it ; and little boys think their elders tyrannical for saying, ' Oh, *you* don't want the fire ; your blood is young.' And truly that is not the way of stating the case, albeit young blood is warmer than old. Now the butter is too hard to spread ; and the rolls and toast are at their maximum ; and the former look glorious as they issue

smoking out of the flannel in which they come from the baker's ; and people who come with single knocks at the door are pitied ; and the voices of boys are loud in the street, sliding or throwing snow-balls ; and the dustman's bell sounds cold ; and we wonder how anybody can go about selling fish, especially with that hoarse voice ; and school-boys hate their slates, and blow their fingers, and detest infinitely the no-fire at school ; and the parish-beadle's nose is redder than ever.

Now sounds in general are dull, and smoke out of chimneys looks warm and rich, and birds are pitied, hopping about for crumbs, and the trees look wiry and cheerless, albeit they are still beautiful to imaginative eyes, especially the evergreens, and the birch with boughs like dishevelled hair. Now mud in roads is stiff, and the kennel ices over, and boys make illegal slides in the pathways, and ashes are strewed before doors ; or you crunch the snow as you tread, or kick mud-flakes before you, or are horribly muddy in cities. But, if it is a hard frost, all the world is buttoned up and great-coated, except ostentatious elderly gentlemen, and pretended beggars with naked feet ; and the delicious sound of 'All-hot' is heard from roasted apple and potato stalls, the vendor himself

being cold, in spite of his 'hot,' and stamping up and down to warm his feet ; and the little boys are astonished to think how he can eat bread and cold meat for his dinner, instead of the smoking apples.

Now skaters are on the alert ; the cutlers' shop-windows abound with their swift shoes ; and as you approach the scene of action (pond or canal) you hear the dull grinding noise of the skates to and fro, and see tumbles, and Banbury cake-men and black-guard boys playing 'hockey,' and ladies standing shivering on the banks, admiring anybody but their brother, especially the gentleman who is cutting figures of eight, who for his part, is admiring his own figure. Beginners affect to laugh at their tumbles, but are terribly angry, and long to thump the by-standers. On thawing days, idlers persist to the last in skating or sliding amidst the slush and bending ice, making the Humane-Society-man ferocious. He feels as if he could give them the deaths from which it is his business to save them. When you have done skating, you come away, feeling at once warm and numb in the feet, from the tight effect of the skates ; and you carry them with an ostentatious air of indifference, as if you had done wonders ; whereas you

have fairly had three slips, and can barely achieve the inside edge.

Now riders look sharp, and horses seem brittle in the legs, and old gentlemen feel so ; and coachmen, cabmen, and others, stand swinging their arms across at their sides to warm themselves ; and blacksmiths' shops look pleasant, and potato shops detestable ; the fishmongers' still more so. We wonder how he can live in that splash of wet and cold fish without even a window. Now clerks in offices envy the one next the fire-place ; and men from behind the counters hardly think themselves repaid by being called out to speak to a countess in her chariot ; and the wheezy and effeminate pastry-cook, hatless and aproned, and with his hand in his breeches-pockets (as the graphic Cruikshank noticeth in his almanack) stands outside his door, chilling his household warmth with attending to the ice which is brought him, and seeing it unloaded into his cellar like coals. Comfortable look the Miss Joneses, coming this way with their muffs and furs ; and the baker pities the maid-servant cleaning the steps, who, for her part, says she is not cold, which he finds it difficult to believe.

Now dinner rejoiceth the gatherers together, and cold meat is despised, and the

gout defieth the morrow, thinking it but reasonable on such a day to inflame itself with 't'other bottle'; and the sofa is wheeled round to the fire after dinner, and people proceed to burn their legs in their boots, and little boys their faces; and young ladies are tormented between the cold and their complexions, and their fingers freeze at the pianoforte, but they must not say so, because it will vex their poor, comfortable grand-aunt, who is sitting with her knees in the fire, and who is so anxious that they should not be spoilt.

Now the muffin-bell soundeth sweetly in the streets, reminding us, not of the man, but his muffins, and of twilight, and evening, and curtains, and the fireside. Now play-goers get cold feet, and invalids stop up every crevice in their rooms, and make themselves worse; and the streets are comparatively silent; and the wind rises and falls in moanings; and the fire burns blue and crackles; and an easy-chair with your feet by it on a stool, the lamp or candles a little behind you, and an interesting book just opened where you left off, is a bit of heaven upon earth. People in cottages crowd close into the chimney, and tell stories of ghosts and murders, the blue

flame affording something like evidence of the facts.

The owl, with all her feathers, is a-cold, or you think her so. The whole country feels like a petrification of slate and stillness, cut across by the wind ; and nobody in the mail-coach is warm but the horses, who steam pitifully when they stop. The 'oldest man' makes a point of never having 'seen such weather.' People have a painful doubt whether they have any chins or not ; ears ache with the wind ; and the waggoner, setting his teeth together, goes puckering up his cheeks, and thinking the time will never arrive when he shall get to the Five Bells.

At night, people become sleepy with the fireside, and long to go to bed, yet fear it on account of the different temperature of the bed-room ; which is furthermore apt to wake them up. Warming-pans and hot-water bottles are in request ; and naughty boys eschew their night-shirts, and go to bed in their socks.

'Yes,' quoth a little boy, to whom we read this passage, 'and make their younger brother go to bed first.'

ON THE REALITIES OF IMAGINATION

[From the *Indicator*, 1834]

THERE is not a more unthinking way of talking than to say such and such pains and pleasures are only imaginary, and therefore to be got rid of or undervalued accordingly. There is nothing imaginary in the common acceptation of the word. The logic of Moses in the *Vicar of Wakefield* is good argument here :—‘Whatever is, is.’ Whatever touches us, whatever moves us, does touch and does move us. We recognise the reality of it, as we do that of a hand in the dark. We might as well say that a sight which makes us laugh, or a blow which brings tears into our eyes, is imaginary, as that anything else is imaginary which makes us laugh or weep. We can only judge of things by their effects. Our perception constantly deceives us, in things with which we suppose ourselves perfectly conversant ; but our reception of their effect is a different matter. Whether we are materialists or immaterialists, whether things be about us or within us, whether we think the sun is a substance, or only the image of a divine thought, an idea, a thing imaginary, we are equally agreed as to the notion of its warmth. But, on the other hand, as this warmth is

felt differently by different temperaments, so what we call imaginary things affect different minds. What we have to do is not to deny their effect, because we do not feel in the same proportion, or whether we even feel it at all ; but to see whether our neighbours may not be moved. If they are, there is, to all intents and purposes, a moving cause. But we do not see it? No ;—neither perhaps do they. They only feel it ; they are only sentient,—a word which implies the sight given to the imagination by the feelings. But what do you mean, we may ask in return, by seeing? Some rays of light come in contact with the eye ; they bring a sensation to it ; in a word, they touch it ; and the impression left by this touch we call sight. How far does this differ in effect from the impression left by any other touch, however mysterious? An ox knocked down by a butcher, and a man knocked down by a fit of apoplexy, equally feel themselves compelled to drop. The tickling of a straw and of a comedy equally move the muscles about the mouth. The look of a beloved eye will so thrill the frame, that old philosophers have had recourse to a doctrine of beams and radiant particles flying from one sight to another.

In fine, what is contact itself, and why does it affect us? There is no one cause more mysterious than another, if we look into it.

Nor does the question concern us like moral causes. We may be content to know the earth by its fruits; but how to increase and improve them is a more attractive study. If, instead of saying that the causes which moved in us this or that pain or pleasure were imaginary, people were to say that the causes themselves were removable, they would be nearer the truth. When a stone trips us up, we do not fall to disputing its existence: we put it out of the way. In like manner, when we suffer from what is called an imaginary pain, our business is not to canvass the reality of it. Whether there is any cause or not in that or any other perception, or whether everything consist not in what is called effect, it is sufficient for us that the effect is real. Our sole business is to remove those second causes, which always accompany the original idea. As in deliriums, for instance, it would be idle to go about persuading the patient that he did not behold the figures he says he does. He might reasonably ask us, if he could, how we know anything about the matter; or how we can be sure that in the infinite wonders

of the universe certain realities may not become apparent to certain eyes, whether diseased or not. Our business would be to put him into that state of health in which human beings are not diverted from their offices and comforts by a liability to such imaginations. The best reply to his question would be, that such a morbidity is clearly no more a fit state for a human being than a disarranged or incomplete state of works is for a watch ; and that seeing the general tendency of nature to this completeness or state of comfort, we naturally conclude that the imaginations in question, whether substantial or not, are at least not of the same lasting or prevailing description.

We do not profess metaphysics. We are indeed so little conversant with the masters of that art, that we are never sure whether we are using even its proper terms. All that we may know on the subject comes to us from some reflection and some experience ; and this all may be so little as to make a metaphysician smile ; which, if he be a true one, he will do good-naturedly. The pretender will take occasion, from our very confession, to say that we know nothing. Our faculty, such as it is, is rather instinctive than reasoning ; rather physical than metaphysical ; rather sentient

because it loves much, than because it knows much ; rather calculated by a certain retention of boyhood, and by its wanderings in the green places of thought, to light upon a piece of the old golden world, than to tire ourselves, and conclude it unattainable, by too wide and scientific a search. We pretend to see farther than none but the worldly and the malignant. And yet those who see farther may not see so well. We do not blind our eyes with looking upon the sun in the heavens. We believe it to be there, but we find its light upon earth also ; and we would lead humanity, if we could, out of misery and coldness into the shine of it. Pain might still be there ; must be so, as long as we are mortal ;

For oft we still must weep, since we are human :
but it should be pain for the sake of others, which is noble ; not unnecessary pain inflicted by or upon them, which it is absurd not to remove. The very pains of mankind struggle towards pleasures ; and such pains as are proper for them have this inevitable accompaniment of true humanity,—that they cannot but realise a certain gentleness of enjoyment. Thus the true bearer of pain would come round to us ; and he would not grudge us a share of his burden, though in taking from his trouble it might diminish his pride.

Pride is but a bad pleasure at the expense of others. The great object of humanity is to enrich everybody. If it is a task destined not to succeed, it is a good one from its very nature ; and fulfils at least a glad destiny of its own. To look upon it austere is in reality the reverse of austerity. It is only such an impatience of the want of pleasure as leads us to grudge it in others ; and this impatience itself, if the sufferer knew how to use it, is but another impulse, in the general yearning, towards an equal wealth of enjoyment.

But we shall be getting into other discussions.—The ground-work of all happiness is health. Take care of this ground ; and the doleful imaginations that come to warn us against its abuse will avoid it. Take care of this ground, and let as many glad imaginations throng to it as possible. Read the magical works of the poets, and they will come. If you doubt their existence, ask yourself whether you feel pleasure at the idea of them ; whether you are moved into delicious smiles, or tears as delicious. If you are, the result is the same to you, whether they exist or not. It is not mere words to say that he who goes through a rich man's park, and sees things in it which never bless the mental eyesight of the

possessor, is richer than he. He is richer. More results of pleasure come home to him. The ground is actually more fertile to him : the place haunted with finer shapes. He has more servants to come at his call, and administer to him with full hands. Knowledge, sympathy, imagination, are all divining-rods, with which he discovers treasure. Let a painter go through the grounds, and he will see not only the general colours of green and brown, but their combinations and contrasts, and the modes in which they might again be combined and contrasted. He will also put figures in the landscape if there are none there, flocks and herds, or a solitary spectator, or Venus lying with her white body among the violets and primroses. Let a musician go through, and he will hear 'differences discreet' in the notes of the birds and the lapsing of the water-fall. He will fancy a serenade of wind instruments in the open air at a lady's window, with a voice rising through it ; or the horn of the hunter ; or the musical cry of the hounds,

Matched in mouth like bells,

Each under each ;

or a solitary voice in a bower, singing for an expected lover ; or the chapel organ, waking up like the fountain of the winds.

Let a poet go through the grounds and he will heighten and increase all these sounds and images. He will bring the colours from heaven, and put an unearthly meaning into the voice. He will have stories of the sylvan inhabitants ; will shift the population through infinite varieties ; will put a sentiment upon every sight and sound ; will be human, romantic, supernatural ; will make all nature send tribute into that spot.

We may say of the love of nature what Shakespeare says of another love, that it

Adds a precious seeing to the eye.

And we may say also, upon the like principle, that it adds a precious hearing to the ear. This and imagination, which ever follows upon it, are the two purifiers of our sense, which rescue us from the deafening babble of common cares, and enable us to hear all the affectionate voices of earth and heaven. The starry orbs, lapsing about in their smooth and sparkling dance, sing to us. The brooks talk to us of solitude. The birds are the animal spirits of nature, carolling in the air, like a careless lass.

The gentle gales,
Fanning their odoriferous wings, dispense
Native perfumes ; and whisper whence they stole
Those balmy spoils.—*Paradise Lost*, book iv.

The poets are called creators, because with their magical words they bring forth to our eyesight the abundant images and beauties of creation. They put them there, if the reader pleases ; and so are literally creators. But whether put there or discovered, whether created or invented (for invention means nothing but finding out), there they are. If they touch us, they exist to as much purpose as anything else which touches us. If a passage in *King Lear* brings the tears into our eyes, it is real as the touch of a sorrowful hand. If the flow of a song of Anacreon's intoxicates us, it is as true to a pulse within us as the wine he drank. We hear not their sounds with ears, nor see their sights with eyes ; but we hear and see both so truly, that we are moved with pleasure ; and the advantage, nay even the test, of seeing and hearing, at any time, is not in the seeing and hearing, but in the ideas we realise, and the pleasure we derive. Intellectual objects, therefore, inasmuch as they come home to us, are as true a part of the stock of nature as visible ones ; and they are infinitely more abundant. Between the tree of a country clown and the tree of a Milton or Spenser, what a difference in point of productiveness ! Between the plodding of a sexton through a

church-yard and the walk of a Gray, what a difference ! What a difference between the Bermudas of a ship-builder and the Bermoothes of Shakespeare ! the isle

Full of noises,
 Sounds, and sweet airs, that give delight, and hurt not ;

the isle of elves and fairies, that chased the tide to and fro on the sea-shore ; of coral-bones and the knell of sea-nymphs ; of spirits dancing on the sands, and singing amidst the hushes of the wind ; of Caliban, whose brute nature enchantment had made poetical ; of Ariel, who lay in cowslip bells, and rode upon the bat ; of Miranda, who wept when she saw Ferdinand work so hard, and begged him to let her help ; telling him,

I am your wife, if you will marry me ;
 If not, I'll die your maid. To be your fellow
 You may deny me ; but I'll be your servant,
 Whether you will or no.

Such are the discoveries which the poets make for us ; worlds to which that of Columbus was but a handful of brute matter. America began to be richer for us the other day, when Humboldt came back and told us of its luxuriant and gigantic vegetation ; of the myriads of shooting lights, which revel at evening in the southern sky ; and of that

grand constellation, at which Dante seems to have made so remarkable a guess (*Purgatorio*, cant. i., v. 22). The natural warmth of the Mexican and Peruvian genius, set free from despotism, will soon do all the rest for it ; awaken the sleeping riches of its eyesight, and call forth the glad music of its affections.

Imagination enriches everything. A great library contains not only books, but

The assembled souls of all that men held wise.

—DAVENANT.

The moon is Homer's and Shakespeare's moon, as well as the one we look at. The sun comes out of his chamber in the east, with a sparkling eye, 'rejoicing like a bridegroom.' The commonest thing becomes like Aaron's rod that budded. Pope called up the spirits of the Cabala to wait upon a lock of hair, and justly gave it the honours of a constellation ; for he has hung it, sparkling for ever in the eyes of posterity. A common meadow is a sorry thing to a ditcher or a coxcomb ; but by the help of its dues from imagination and the love of nature, the grass brightens for us, the air soothes us, we feel as we did in the daisied hours of childhood. Its verdures, its sheep, its hedge-row elms,—all these, and all else which sight,

and sound, and associations can give it, are made to furnish a treasure of pleasant thoughts. Even brick and mortar are vivified, as of old, at the harp of Orpheus. A metropolis becomes no longer a mere collection of houses or of trades. It puts on all the grandeur of its history, and its literature ; its towers, and rivers ; its art, and jewellery, and foreign wealth ; its multitude of human beings all intent upon excitement, wise or yet to learn ; the huge and sullen dignity of its canopy of smoke by day ; the wide gleam upwards of its lighted lustre at night-time ; and the noise of its many chariots, heard at the same hour, when the wind sets gently towards some quiet suburb.

SPRING AND DAISIES

[From the *Indicator*, 1834]

SPRING, while we are writing, is complete. The winds have done their work. The shaken air, well tempered and equalised, has subsided ; the genial rains, however thickly they may come, do not saturate the ground beyond the power of the sun to dry it up again. There are clear crystal mornings ; noons of blue sky and white

cloud ; nights, in which the growing moon seems to lie looking at the stars, like a young shepherdess at her flock. A few days ago she lay gazing in this manner at the solitary evening star, like Diana, on the slope of a valley, looking up at Endymion. His young eye seemed to sparkle out upon the world ; while she, bending inwards, her hands behind her head, watched him with an enamoured dumbness.

But this is the quiet of Spring. Its voices and swift movements have come back also. The swallow shoots by us, like an embodied ardour of the season. The glowing bee has his will of the honied flowers, grappling with them as they tremble. We have not yet heard the nightingale or the cuckoo ; but we can hear them with our imagination, and enjoy them through the content of those who have.

Then the young green. This is the most apt and perfect mark of the season—the true issuing forth of the Spring. The trees and bushes are putting forth their crisp fans ; the lilac is loaded with bud ; the meadows are thick with the bright young grass, running into sweeps of white and gold with the daisies and butter-cups. The orchards announce their riches, in a shower of silver

blossoms. The earth in fertile woods is spread with yellow and blue carpets of primroses, violets, and hyacinths, over which the birch-trees, like stooping nymphs, hang with their thickening hair. Lilies-of-the-valley, stocks, columbines, lady-smocks, and the intensely red peony which seems to anticipate the full glow of summer-time, all come out to wait upon the season, like fairies from their subterraneous palaces.

Who is to wonder that the idea of love mingles itself with that of this cheerful and kind time of the year, setting aside even common associations? It is not only its youth, and beauty, and budding life, and 'the passion of the groves,' that exclaim with the poet,

Let those love now, who never loved before ;

And those who always loved, now love the more.

All our kindly impulses are apt to have more sentiment in them than the world suspects ; and it is by fetching out this sentiment, and making it the ruling association, that we exalt the impulse into generosity and refinement, instead of degrading it, as is too much the case, into what is selfish, and coarse, and pollutes all our systems. One of the greatest inspirers of love is gratitude — not merely on its common

grounds, but gratitude for pleasures, whether consciously or unconsciously conferred. Thus we are thankful for the delight given us by a kind and sincere face ; and if we fall in love with it, one great reason is, that we long to return what we have received. The same feeling has a considerable influence in the love that has been felt for men of talents, whose persons or address have not been much calculated to inspire it. In spring-time, joy awakens the heart : with joy awakes gratitude and nature ; and in our gratitude we return, on its own principle of participation, the love that has been shown us.

This association of ideas renders solitude in spring, and solitude in winter, two very different things. In the latter, we are better content to bear the feelings of the season by ourselves ; in the former, they are so sweet as well as so overflowing, that we long to share them. Shakespeare, in one of his sonnets, describes himself as so identifying the beauties of the Spring with the thought of his absent mistress, that he says he forgot them in their own character, and played with them only as with her shadow. See how exquisitely he turns a commonplace into this fancy ; and what a noble, brief portrait of

April he gives us at the beginning. There is indeed a wonderful mixture of softness and strength in almost every one of the lines.

From you have I been absent in the spring,
When proud-pied April, dressed in all his trim,
Hath put a spirit of youth in everything ;
That heavy Saturn laughed and leaped with him.
Yet not the lays of birds, nor the sweet smell
Of different flowers in odour and in hue,
Could make me any summer's story tell,
Or from their proud lap pluck them where they grew :
Nor did I wonder at the lilies white,
Nor praise the deep vermilion in the rose :
They were but sweet, but patterns of delight,
Drawn after you, you pattern of all those.
Yet seemed it winter still ; and, you away,
As with your shadow, I with these did play.

Shakespeare was fond of alluding to April. He did not allow May to have all his regard, because she was richer. Perdita, crowned with flowers, in the *Winter's Tale*, is beautifully compared to

Flora,
Peering in April's front.

There is a line in one of his sonnets, which, agreeably to the image he had in his mind, seems to strike up in one's face, hot and odorous, like perfume in a censer.

In process of the seasons have I seen
Three April perfumes in three hot Junes burned.

His allusions to Spring are numerous in proportion. We all know the song containing that fine line, fresh from the most brilliant of pallets :—

When daisies pied, and violets blue,
And lady-smocks all silver white,
And cuckoo-buds of yellow hue,
Do paint the meadows with delight.

We owe a long debt of gratitude to the daisy ; and we take this opportunity of discharging a millionth part of it. If we undertook to pay it all, we should have had to write such a book as is never very likely to be written—a journal of numberless happy hours in childhood, kept with the feelings of an infant and the pen of a man. For it would take, we suspect, a depth of delight and a subtlety of words to express even the vague joy of infancy, such as our learned departures from natural wisdom would find it more difficult to put together, than criticism and comfort, or an old palate and a young relish.—But knowledge is the widening and the brightening road that must conduct us back to the joys from which it led us ; and which it is destined perhaps to secure and extend. We must not quarrel with its asperities, when we can help.

We do not know the Greek name of the

daisy, nor do the dictionaries inform us ; and we are not at present in the way of consulting books that might. We always like to see what the Greeks say to these things, because they had a sentiment in their enjoyments. The Latins called the daisy *Bellis* or *Bellus*, as much as to say Nice One. With the French and Italians it has the same name as a Pearl—*Marguerite*, *Margarita*, or, by way of endearment, *Margheretina*. The same word was the name of a woman, and occasioned infinite intermixtures of compliment about pearls, daisies, and fair mistresses. Chaucer, in his beautiful poem of the *Flower and the Leaf*, which is evidently imitated from some French poetess, says,

And at the laste there began anon
A lady for to sing right womanly
A bargaret in praising the daisie,
For as me thought among her notes sweet,
She said ‘*Si douset est la Margarete.*’

‘The Margaret is so sweet.’ Our Margaret, however, in this allegorical poem, is undervalued in comparison with the laurel ; yet Chaucer perhaps was partly induced to translate it on account of its making the figure that it does ; for he has informed us more than once, in a very particular manner,

that it was his favourite flower. He says that he finds it ever new, and that he shall love it till his 'heart dies'; and afterwards, with a natural picture of his resting on the grass,

Adown full softëley I gan to sink,
And leaning on my elbow and my side,
The long day I shope me for to abide
For nothing else, and I shall not lie,
But for to look upon the daisie ;
That well by reason men it call may
The daisie, or else the eye of day.

This etymology, which we have no doubt is the real one, is repeated by Ben Jonson, who takes occasion to spell the word 'days-eyes' adding, with his usual tendency to overdo a matter of learning,

Days-eyes, and the lippes of cows ;

videlicet, cowslips : which is a disentanglement of compounds, in the style of our pleasant parodists

——Puddings of the plum,
And fingers of the lady.

Mr Wordsworth introduces his homage to the daisy with a passage from George Wither ; which, as it is an old favourite of ours, and extremely applicable both to this article and our whole work, we cannot deny

ourselves the pleasure of repeating. It is the more interesting, inasmuch as it was written in prison, where the freedom of the author's opinions had thrown him. He is speaking of his Muse, or Imagination.

Her divine skill taught me this ;
That from everything I saw
I could some instruction draw,
And raise pleasure to the height
From the meanest object's sight.
By the murmur of a spring,
Or the least bough's rustelling ;
By a daisy, whose leaves spread
Shut, when Titan goes to bed ;
Or a shady bush or tree ;
She could more infuse in me,
Than all Nature's beauties can
In some other wiser man.

Mr Wordsworth undertakes to patronise the *Celandine*, because nobody else will notice it ; which is a good reason. But though he tells us, in a startling piece of information, that

Poets, vain men in their mood,
Travel with the multitude,

yet he falls in with his old brethren of England and Normandy, and becomes loyal to the daisy.

Mr Wordsworth calls the daisy 'an

unassuming commonplace of Nature,' which it is ; and he praises it very becomingly for discharging its duties so cheerfully, in that universal character. But we cannot agree with him in thinking that it has a 'homely face.' Not that we should care if it had ; for homeliness does not make ugliness ; but we appeal to everybody, whether it is proper to say this of *la belle Marguerite*. In the first place, its shape is very pretty and slender, but not too much so. Then it has a boss of gold, set round and irradiated with silver points. Its yellow and fair white are in so high a taste of contrast, that Spenser has chosen the same colours for a picture of Leda reposing :

Oh wondrous skill and sweet wit of the man !
That her in daffodillies sleeping laid,
From scorching heat her dainty limbs to shade.

It is for the same reason that the daisy, being chiefly white, makes such a beautiful show in company with the buttercup. But this is not all ; for look at the back, and you find its fair petals blushing with a most delightful red. And how compactly and delicately is the neck set in green ! *Belle et douce Marguerite, aimable sœur du roi Kingcup*, we would tilt for thee with a

hundred pens, against the stoutest poet that did not find perfection in thy cheek.

But here somebody may remind us of the spring showers, and what drawbacks they are upon going into the fields.—Not at all so, when the spring is really confirmed, and the showers but April-like and at intervals. Let us turn our imaginations to the bright side of spring, and we shall forget the showers. You see they have been forgotten just this moment. Besides, we are not likely to stray too far into the fields; and if we should, are there not hats, bonnets, barns, cottages, elm-trees, and good wills? We may make these things zests, if we please, instead of drawbacks.

DREAMS ON THE BORDERS OF THE LAND OF POETRY

[From the *Keepsake*, 1828. It is to Mr Arthur Symons' taste and judgment that we owe the recovery of this beautiful essay from anonymity. Published without signature on its original appearance, it was never reprinted until Mr Symons gave it the first place in his selections of 1887.]

I. THE DEMANDS OF POETRY

I HAVE not been in the habit of making memorandums for my verses. Such verse

as I could write I have written at once. But the older I grow, the more reverent notions I entertain of poetry ; and as I cannot aspire to put anything into verse, and pretend to call it poetry, without shaping it in the best manner of which I am capable (for poetry, without the fit sculpture of verse, is no more to be called poetry, than beauty conceived is beauty accomplished), so I have neither leisure to pay it the requisite attention, nor can I afford the spirit and emotion necessary for this task above all others. The greatest of all poets (who, according to Plato, is God) uttered the planets in his energy, and they went singing around him, perfect. Milton (not to speak it with profaneness, after that unreachable instance) could pour forth his magnificent verses, mighty and full of music, like a procession towards a temple of glory. We conceive of Shakespeare, that he had a still easier might, and that the noblest verses to him were no greater difficulty than talking. He dispensed them as Nature does the summer showers and the thunder. Alas ! to us petty men, who are not sure that we have even the right of being

Proud to be less, but of that godlike race,
to us, and our inferior natures, there are

sometimes toils in life less voluntary and more exhausting than poetry, in reposing from which it is not always possible for us to labour even with the minor energies necessary to throw out the forms within our capacity. We cannot wrestle to fit purpose even with that pettier god within us. We cannot condense those lighter vapours of inspiration into their most vigorous and graceful shape, and feel a right to say to the world, 'Behold !'

A poet's hand should be like the energy within the oak, to make strong ; and like the wind that bends its foliage, to make various. Without concentration, and without variety, there is neither strength of imagination, nor beauty of verse. Alas ! I could no more look to making verses with an ambition of this sort, wearied as I am at present, than I could think of looking through burning glasses for eyes, or hewing the solid rock into a dance of the Graces.

But I have the wish to be a poet, and thoughts will arise within me as painful not to express as a lover's. I therefore write memorandums for verse ;—thoughts that might perhaps be worthy of putting into that shape, if they could be properly developed ; hints and shadows of something poetical,

that have the same relationship to actual poetry as the little unborn spirits that perish by the waters of Lethe have to the souls that visit us, and become immortal.

II. MY BOWER

I seek not for grand emotions when I muse. My life has had enough of them. I seek for enjoyment and repose ; and, thanks to the invincible youthfulness of my heart, I find them with as much ease in my green world as giant sorrows have found me in the world of strife.

Woods and meadows are to me an enchanted ground, of which a knight-errantry of a new sort has put me in possession.

In the indulgence of these effusions I lay my head as on a pillow before I sleep, as on the grass in summer, as on the lap that soothes us. O lovers of books and of nature, lovers of one another, lovers of love, rest with me under my bowers ; and the shadows of pleasant thoughts shall play upon your eyelids.

III. ON A BUST OF BACCHUS

Gigantic, earnest, luxuriant, his head a very bower of hair and ivy ; his look a mixture of threat, and reassurance, and the giving of pleasure ; the roughness of wine

is in his eyes, and the sweetness of it on his lips. Annibal Caracci would have painted such a face, and grown jealous when his mistress looked at it.

To those shoulders belong the hands that lifted the satyr by the nape of the neck, and played with the lion's mouth as with a dog's.

Cannot you see the glow in the face, even though sculptured ? a noontide of the south in its strength ? with dark wells in the eyes, under shining locks and sunny leaves ? The geniality of his father Jove is in it, with the impetuosity of wine : but it is the lord not the servant, of wine ; the urger of the bowl among the divinities, when the pulses of heaven are in movement with song and dance, and goddess by the side of god looks downward.

Such did he appear when Ariadne turned pale with loving him ; and he said, with divine insolence in his eyes, ' Am I not then better than a mortal ? '

IV. THE GAINS OF A LOVE UNVULGAR

No :—admire beauty as I may, I cannot love it unless it be lovely ; unless it be kind and sincere, and have a soul in it befitting the body. Some, in thinking of a face, are content with a sprightly substance ; the true

woman is lost upon them : animated wax-work would do as well. Of such are those who flatter themselves, that they know most of the sex, and who speak of it with an air of stupid cunning. These men are incapable even of the voluptuousness they affect. Not knowing the soul of beauty, they do not properly know even the body of it.

Others include a sense of grace ; others the mind, the wit, the affections, all that makes the human being a charmer, and puts twenty souls instead of one into the wish to thank and to delight her. When lovers of the vulgar sort receive a kiss from the lips of such a woman (unworthy they to receive it ! and mistaken she to believe them better !) they are sensible but of one kind of beauty ; they kiss the lip and the substance only. The others, when they receive it—grace, beauty, intelligence, the affections, the rosy colour, the good-heartedness, and the truth—yes, all these are to be found in the lip, and they kiss them all.

V. SPRING AND SUMMER

The golden line is drawn between winter and summer. Behind, all is bleakness, and darkness, and dissolution. Before, is hope, and soft airs, and the flowers, and the sweet

season of hay ; and people will cross the fields, reading, or walking with one another (lovers) ; and instead of the rain that soaks death into the heart of green things, will be the rain which they drink with delight ; and there will be sleep on the grass at mid-day, and early rising in the morning, and long moonlight evenings with quiet walks ; and we shall sit with our window open, and hear the rooks.

Already the rains are well-tempered. We care not for the chillness, for it is vernal, the cold of a young hand instead of an old one ; and at noon, when the sun slips from out a blue interval of sky, we feel him warm on our backs.

Passing the top of the green lane, a gush of song bursts out upon us from the ivy-bush that clothes the sides of the old house.

See !—birds come by fives and tens in the meadows, agile, unseen before, springing away with a song. And the tops of the horse-chestnut boughs look as if they glowed into the air with life.

VI. RAIN AND SUNSHINE IN MAY

Can anything, out of the pale of the affections, be more lovely than the meadows

between the rains of May, when the sun smites them on the sudden like a painter, and they laugh up at him, as if he had lighted a loving cheek !

And did I say they were out of the pale of the affections ? See how my language contradicts me : for all lovely things hang together ; neither can a true note of pleasure be touched, but all the chords of humanity respond to it.

I speak of a season when the returning threats of cold, and the resisting warmth of summer-time, make robust mirth in the air ; when the winds imitate on a sudden the vehemence of winter ; and silver-white clouds are abrupt in their coming down ; and shadows in the grass chase one another, panting, over the fields, like a pursuit of spirits. With undulating necks they pant forward, like hounds or a leopard.

See ! the cloud is after the light, gliding over the country like the shadow of a god.

And now the meadows are lit up here and there with sunshine, as if the soul of Titian were standing in Heaven and playing his fancies upon them. Green are the trees in shadow ; but the trees in the sun, how twenty - fold green they are — rich and

variegated with gold. Ovid's parrot inhabits such foliage in the Birds' Elysium.

VII. AN EVENING LANDSCAPE

Did anybody ever think of painting a picture in writing? I mean literally so, marking the localities as in a map.

The other evening I sat in a landscape that would have enchanted Cuyp.

Scene—a broken heath, with hills in the distance. The immediate picture stood thus, the top and the bottom of it being nearly on a level in the perspective :—

Trees in a sunset, at no great distance from the foreground.

A group of cattle under them, party-coloured,
principally red, standing on a small landing place ;
the Sun coming upon them through the trees.

A rising ground

A rising ground

Broken ground.

with trees

with trees

Another landing place, nearly on a level
with the cows, the spectator sitting and looking at them.

The Sun came warm and serious on the glowing red of the cattle, as if recognising their evening hues ; and everything appeared full of that quiet spirit of consciousness, with which Nature seems rewarded at the close of its day labours.

VIII. A SIGHT OF THE GODS

I sat upon a green platform under pines, my legs resting over the edge upon a natural step ; and a valley lay before me, in a heath, oval, perfect, with hills in the distance. And I said, 'By the love I bear you, visions of beauty, come before me, and play me magnificent shows !'

And they came.

And I saw gods and white goddesses, of mighty stature but lovely ; for coarseness was not discernible in their features, but all beauty. And they floated in and about, as my thought summoned them, reclining on the air in the easiness of their will.

And there was Apollo, and he slew the Python in a twilight ; and Aurora and the morn broke, all gold and roses ; and the Graces, and the whole place became white with lilies ; and there was Paris giving the apple ; and the Muses ; and Hercules and Alceste ; and Pan, Pomona, Hylas, and Zephyr and Flora, and Hesperides. Zephyr took Flora into the air with a net, as the Italian poet sings ; and the twins of Leda passed, with their dancing lights ; and Hercules led along Alceste, who in the

faintness of her death had been as mighty as he.

Sometimes music poured in, as from a hundred fountains ; and sometimes a goddess called. Not a leaf then stirred ; but the silence trembled. I heard Venus speak ; which was as if there should never be sorrow more.

XI. BEAUTY NOT EXAGGERATED BY IMAGINATION

They say that I speak too highly of what I admire ; and that half the beauties which I discern in any object I put there myself. Believe them not. Nature has been before us. We only read what she has written. If others cannot read as much, is that the fault of the book ? No : it is their own.

Look at one of the simplest and the most beautiful objects in the world, a cheek ; and tell us, how came it ? What a thought was the cheek itself, when Nature created it ! And do you suppose that a vulgar eye estimates it enough ! Put the question to those who can do something like it themselves ; to Raphael, or to the poets.

As the poet's thought is worth what it produces, so the cheek of the beauty is worth what it can suggest.

DEATHS OF LITTLE CHILDREN

[*Indicator*, 1820. This essay was a favourite with Lamb.]

A GRECIAN philosopher being asked why he wept for the death of his son, since the sorrow was in vain, replied, 'I weep on that very account.' And his answer became his wisdom. It is only for sophists to pretend that we, whose eyes contain the fountains of tears, need never give way to them. It would be unwise not to do so on some occasions. Sorrow unlocks them in her balmy moods. The first bursts may be bitter and overwhelming; but the soil on which they pour, would be the worse without them. They refresh the fever of the soul,—the dry misery, which parches the countenance into furrows, and renders us liable to our most terrible 'flesh-quakes.'

There are sorrows, it is true, so great, that to give them some of the ordinary vents is to run a hazard of being overthrown. These we must rather strengthen ourselves to resist; or bow quietly and dryly down in order to let them pass over us, as the traveller does the wind of the desert. But where we feel that tears would relieve us, it is false philosophy to deny ourselves at least that first refreshment; and it is always false consolation to tell people that because

they cannot help a thing, they are not to mind it. The true way is, to let them grapple with the unavoidable sorrow, and try to win it into gentleness by a reasonable yielding. There are griefs so gentle in their very nature, that it would be worse than false heroism to refuse them a tear. Of this kind are the deaths of infants. Particular circumstances may render it more or less advisable to indulge in grief for the loss of a little child ; but in general, parents should be no more advised to repress their first tears on such an occasion, than to repress their smiles towards a child surviving, or to indulge in any other sympathy. It is an appeal to the same gentle tenderness ; and such appeals are never made in vain. The end of them is an acquittal from the harsher bonds of affliction,—from the tying down of the spirit to one melancholy idea.

It is the nature of tears of this kind, however strongly they may gush forth, to run into quiet waters at last. We cannot easily, for the whole course of our lives, think with pain of any good and kind person whom we have lost. It is the divine nature of their qualities to conquer pain and death itself ; to turn the memory of them into pleasure ; to survive with a placid aspect in our imagina-

tions. We are writing, at this moment, just opposite a spot which contains the grave of one inexpressibly dear to us. We see from our window the trees about it, and the church-spire. The green fields lie around. The clouds are travelling overhead, alternately taking away the sunshine and restoring it. The vernal winds, piping of the flowery summer-time, are nevertheless calling to mind the far distant and dangerous ocean, which the heart that lies in that grave had many reasons to think of. And yet the sight of this spot does not give us pain. So far from it, it is the existence of that grave which doubles every charm of the spot ; which links the pleasures of our childhood and manhood together ; which puts a hushing tenderness in the winds, and a patient joy upon the landscape ; which seems to unite heaven and earth, mortality and immortality, the grass of the tomb and the grass of the green field, and gives a more maternal aspect to the whole kindness of nature. It does not hinder gaiety itself. Happiness was what its tenant, through all her troubles, would have diffused. To diffuse happiness, and to enjoy it, is not only carrying on her wishes, but realising her hopes ; and gaiety, freed from its only pollu-

tions, malignity and want of sympathy, is but a child playing about the knees of its mother.

The remembered innocence and endearments of a child stand us instead of virtues that have died older. Children have not exercised the voluntary offices of friendship ; they have not chosen to be kind and good to us ; nor stood by us, from conscious will, in the hour of adversity. But they have shared their pleasures and pains with us as well as they could : the interchange of good offices between us has, of necessity, been less mingled with the troubles of the world ; the sorrow arising from their death is the only one which we can associate with their memories. These are happy thoughts that cannot die. Our loss may render them pensive ; but they will not always be painful. It is a part of the benignity of Nature, that pain does not survive like pleasure, at any time ; much less where the cause of it is an innocent one. The smile will remain reflected by memory ; as the moon reflects the light upon us, when the sun has gone into heaven.

When writers like ourselves quarrel with earthly pain (we mean writers of the same intentions, without implying, of course, anything about abilities or otherwise) they are misunderstood if they are supposed to quarrel

with pains of every sort. This would be idle and effeminate. They do not pretend, indeed, that humanity might not wish, if it could, to be entirely free from pain ; for it endeavours at all times to turn pain into pleasure, or at least to set off the one with the other ; to make the former a zest, and the latter a refreshment. The most unaffected dignity of suffering does this ; and if wise, acknowledges it. The greatest benevolence towards others, the most unselfish relish of their pleasures, even at its own expense, does but look to increasing the general stock of happiness, though content, if it could, to have its identity swallowed up in that splendid contemplation. We are far from meaning that this is to be called selfishness. We are far indeed from thinking so, or of so confounding words. But neither is it to be called pain, when most unselfish ; if disinterestedness be truly understood. The pain that is in it softens into pleasure, as the darker hue of the rainbow melts into the brighter. Yet even if a harsher line is to be drawn between the pain and pleasure of the most unselfish mind (and ill health, for instance, may draw it), we should not quarrel with it, if it contributed to the general mass of comfort, and were of

a nature which general kindliness could not avoid. Made as we are, there are certain pains, without which it would be difficult to conceive certain great and overbalancing pleasures. We may conceive it possible for beings to be made entirely happy ; but in our composition, something of pain seems to be a necessary ingredient, in order that the materials may turn to as fine account as possible ; though our clay, in the course of ages and experience, may be refined more and more. We may get rid of the worst earth, though not of earth itself.

Now the liability to the loss of children,—or rather what renders us sensible of it, the occasional loss itself,—seems to be one of these necessary bitters thrown into the cup of humanity. We do not mean that everybody must lose one of his children, in order to enjoy the rest ; or that every individual loss afflicts us in the same proportion. We allude to the deaths of infants in general. These might be as few as we could render them. But if none at all ever took place, we should regard every little child as a man or a woman secured ; and it will easily be conceived, what a world of endearing cares and hopes this security would endanger. The very idea of infancy would lose its continuity with us. Girls and boys would

be future men and women, not present children. They would have attained their full growth in our imaginations, and might as well have been men and women at once. On the other hand, those who have lost an infant are never, as it were, without an infant child. They are the only persons who, in one sense, retain it always; and they furnish their neighbours with the same idea.* The other children grow up to manhood and womanhood, and suffer all the changes of mortality. This one alone is rendered an immortal child. Death has arrested it with his kindly harshness, and blessed it into an eternal image of youth and innocence.

Of such as these are the pleasantest shapes that visit our fancy and our hopes. They are the ever-smiling emblems of joy; the prettiest pages that wait upon imagination. Lastly, 'of these are the kingdom of heaven.' Wherever there is a province of that benevolent and all-accessible empire, whether on earth or elsewhere, such are the gentle spirits that must inhabit it. To such simplicity, or the resemblance of it, must they

* 'I sighed,' says old Captain Bolton, 'when I envied you the two bonny children, but I sigh not now to call either the monk or the soldier mine own.'—*Monastery*, vol. iii. p. 341.—[L. H.]

come. Such must be the ready confidence of their hearts, and creativeness of their fancy. And so ignorant must they be of the 'knowledge of good and evil,' losing their discernment of that self-created trouble, by enjoying the garden before them, and not being ashamed of what is kindly and innocent.

ON SEEING A PIGEON MAKE LOVE

[*Examiner*, 1824]

Ut albulus columbus, aut Adoneus?—CATULLUS.

Which is he? Pigeon, or Adonis?

THE French have a lazy way, in some of their compositions, of writing prose and verse alternately. The author, whenever it is convenient for him to be inspired, begins dancing away in rhyme. The fit over, he goes on as before, as if nothing had happened. We have essays in prose and verse by Cowley (a delightful book) in which the same piece contains both; but with one exception, they are rather poems with long prefaces.

If ever this practice is allowable, it is to a periodical writer in love with poetry. He is obliged to write prose; he is tormented with the desire of venting himself in rhyme; he rhymes, and has not leisure to go on. Behold me, as a Frenchman would say, with my rhyme and my reason!

The following verses were suggested by a sight of a pigeon making love. The scene took place in a large sitting-room, where a beau might have followed a lady up and down with as bustling a solicitation: he could not have done it with more. The birds had been brought there for sale; but they knew no more of this than two lovers whom destiny has designs upon. The gentleman was as much at his ease as if he had been a Bond Street loungeur pursuing his fair in a solitary street. I must add, as an excuse for the abruptness of the exordium, that the house belonged to a poet of my acquaintance, who was in the room at the same time.*

Is not the picture strangely like?
Doesn't the very bowing strike?
Can any art of love in fashion
Express a more prevailing passion?
That air—that sticking to her side—
That deference, ill-concealing pride,—
That seeming consciousness of coat,
And repetition of one note,—
Ducking and tossing back his head,
As if at every bow he said,
'Madam, by Heaven,'—or 'Strike me dead.'

* Lord Byron. The house was the Casa Saluzzi, at Albaro, near Genoa.—[L. H.]

And then the lady ! look at her :
 What bridling sense of character !
 How she declines, and seems to go,
 Yet still endures him to and fro ;
 Carrying her plumes and pretty clothings,
 Blushing stare, and mutter'd nothings,
 Body plump, and airy feet,
 Like any charmer in a street.

Give him a hat beneath his wing,
 And is not he the very thing ?
 Give her a parasol or plaything,
 And is not she the very she-thing ?

My companion, who had run the round of the great world, seemed to be rather mortified than otherwise at this spectacle. It was certainly calculated, at first blush, to damp the pride of the circles : but upon reflection, it seemed to afford a considerable lift to beaux and belles in ordinary. It seemed to show how much of instinct, and of the common unreflecting course of things, there is even in the gallantries of those who flatter themselves that they are vicious. Nobody expects wisdom in these persons ; and if they can be found to be less guilty than is supposed, the gain is much : for, as to letting the dignity of human nature depend upon theirs on the one hand, or expecting to bring about any change in their conduct

by lecturing them on their faults, on the other, it is a speculation equally hopeless.

If a man of pleasure 'about town' is swayed by anything, it is by a fear of becoming ridiculous. If he must continue in his old courses, it is pleasant to know him for what he is, and that pigeons are not confined to the gaming-table.

I once followed a young man of fashion in and out a variety of streets at the west end of the town, through which he was haunting a poor blushing damsel, who appeared to be at once distressed by him and endangered. I thought she seemed to be wishing for something to turn the scale in favour of her self-denial; and I resolved to furnish it. Could the consequences of his success have rested entirely with himself, I saw enough of the *pigeon* in him not to have been so ill-bred as to 'spoil sport'; but considering, as times go, that which is sport to the gentleman in these cases is very often death to the lady, I found myself compelled to be rude and conscientious. In vain he looked round every now and then, putting on his best astonishment, and cursing, no doubt, 'the indelicacy of the fellow.' There I was, low and insolent,—sticking to his skirts, wondering whether he would

think me of importance enough for a challenge, and by what bon-mot or other ingenious baffling of his resentment I should contrive at once to save our life and the lady. At length he turned abruptly across the street, and I followed the poor girl, till she was at a safe distance. I caught but one other glimpse of her face, which was as red as scarlet. I fancied, when all was safe, that some anger against her deliverer might mingle with her blushes, and was obliged to encourage myself against a sort of shame for my interference. I wished I could have spoken to her ; but this was impossible ; nay, considering the mutual tenderness of my virtue at that instant, might have been dangerous. So I made my retreat in the same manner as my gentleman ; and have thought of her face with kindness ever since.

To return to our pigeons :—the description given in the verses is true to the letter. The reader must not think it a poetical exaggeration. If he has never witnessed an exhibition of the kind, he has no conception of the high human hand with which these pigeons carry it. The poets indeed, time out of mind, have taken amatory illustrations from them ; but the literal courtship surpasses them all. One sight of a pigeon

paying his addresses would be sufficient to unsettle in our minds all those proud conclusions which we draw respecting the difference between reason and instinct. If this is mere instinct as distinguished from reason, if a bird follows another bird up and down by a simple mechanical impulse, giving himself all the airs and graces imaginable, exciting as many in his mistress, and uttering every moment articulate sounds which we are no more bound to suppose deficient in meaning than a pigeon would be warranted in supposing the same of our own speech, then reason itself may be no more than a mechanical impulse. It has nothing better to show for it. Our mechanism may possess a greater variety of movements, and be more adapted to a variety of circumstances ; but if there is not variety here, and an adaptation to circumstances, I know not where there is. If it be answered, that pigeons would never make love in any other manner, under any circumstances, we do not know that. Have people observed them sufficiently to know that they always make love equally well? If they have varied at any time, they may vary again. Our own modes of courtship are undoubtedly very numerous ; and some of them are as different from others, as the

courtship of the pigeon itself from that of the hog. But though we are observers of ourselves, have we yet observed other animals sufficiently to pronounce upon the limits of their capacity? We are apt to suppose that all sheep and oxen resemble one another in the face. The slightest observation convinces us that their countenances are as various as those of men. How are we to know that the shades and modifications of their character and conduct are not as various? A well-drilled nation would hardly look more various in the eyes of a bee, than a swarm of bees does in our own. The minuter differences in our conduct would escape them for want of the habit of observing us, and because their own are of another sort. How are we to say that we do not judge them as ill? Every fresh speculation into the habits and manners of that singular little people produces new and extraordinary discoveries. The bees in *Buffon's time* were in the habit, when they built their hives, of providing for a certain departure from the more obvious rules of architecture, which at a particular part of the construction became necessary. Buffon ingeniously argued, that because they always practised this secret geometry, and never

did otherwise, their apparent departure itself was but another piece of instinct ; and he concluded that they always had done so, and always would. Possibly they will ; but the conclusion is not made out by his argument. A being who knows how to build better than we do might as well assert, that because we have not arrived at certain parts of his knowledge, we never shall. Observe the vast time which it takes us, with all our boasted reason, to attain to improvements in our own arts and sciences ; think how little we know after all ; what little certainty we have respecting periods which are but as yesterday, compared with the mighty lapse of time ; and judge how much right we have to say, This we never did—This we shall never be able to do.

I have read of some beavers, that when they were put into a situation very different from their ordinary one, and incited to build a house, they set about their work in a style as ingeniously adapted as possible to their new circumstances. Buffon might say they had been in this situation before ; he might also argue that they were provided with an instinct against the emergency. One argument appears to me as good as the other. But under the circumstances he might tell

us that they would probably act with stupidity. And what is done by many human beings? Is our reason as good for us all on one occasion as another? The individuals of the same race of animals are not all equally clever, any more than ourselves. The more they come under our inspection (as in the case of dogs), the more varieties we discern in their characters and understandings. The most philosophical thing hitherto said on the subject appears to be that of Pope.

‘I shall be very glad,’ said Spence, ‘to see Dr Hales, and always love to see him, he is so worthy and good a man.’ POPE. ‘Yes, he is a very good man; only I’m sorry he has his hands so much imbrued in blood.’ SPENCE. ‘What! he cuts up rats?’ POPE. ‘Aye, and dogs too!’ (With what emphasis and concern, cries Spence, he spoke it.) ‘Indeed, he commits most of these barbarities with the thought of being of use to man; but how do we know that we have a right to kill creatures that we are so little above as dogs, for our curiosity, or even for some use to us?’ SPENCE. ‘I used to carry it too far: I thought they had reason as well as we.’ POPE. ‘So they have to be sure. All our disputes about that are

only disputes about words. Man has reason enough only to know what is necessary for him to know, and dogs have just that too.'

SPENCE. 'But then they must have souls too, as imperishable in their nature as ours?'

POPE. 'And what harm would that be to us?'

All this passage is admirable, and helps to make us love, as we ought to do, a man who has contributed so much to the entertainment of the world.

That dogs, like men, have 'reason enough only to know what is necessary for them to know,' is, of course, no argument against their acting in a new manner under novel circumstances. It is the same with us. Necessities alter with circumstances. There is a well-authenticated story of a dog, who, having been ill-treated by a larger one, went and brought a still larger dog to avenge his cause, and see justice done him. When does a human necessity reason better than this? The greatest distinction between men and other animals appears to consist in this, that the former make a point of cultivating their reason; and yet it is impossible to say that nothing of the kind has ever been done by the latter. Birds and beasts in general do not take the trouble of going

out of their ordinary course : but is the ambition of the common run of human beings any greater ? Have not peasants and mechanics, and even those who flourish and grow learned under establishments, an equal tendency to deprecate the necessity of innovation ? A farmer would go on with his old plough, a weaver with his old loom, and a placeman with his old opinions, to all eternity, if it were not for the restlessness of individuals ; and these are forced to battle their way against a thousand prejudices, even to do the greatest good. An established critic has not always a right to triumph over the learned pig.

We have been told that the ‘swinish multitude’ are better without books. Now the utmost which the holders of this opinion can say for the superior reason of their species is, that pigs dispense already with a knowledge which is unfit for men. They tell us, nevertheless (and I receive the text with reverence), that a day shall come when ‘the lion will lie down with the lamb’ ; and yet they will laugh in your face if you suspect that beasts may be improvable creatures, or even that men may deserve to be made wiser. But they will say that this great event is not to be brought about by knowledge. Some

of their texts say otherwise. I believe that all which they know of the matter is, that it will not be brought about by themselves.

But we must not be led away from the dignity of our subject by the natural tendencies of these gentlemen. Human means are divine means, if the end be divine. Without controverting the spirit of the text in question, it would be difficult, from what we see already of the power of different animals to associate kindly with each other (such as lions with little dogs, cats and birds in the same cages, etc.), to pronounce upon the limits of improbability in the brute creation, as far as their organs will allow. I would not venture to assert that, in the course of ages, and by the improved action of those causes which give rise to their present state of being, the organs themselves will not undergo alteration. There is a part in the pectoral conformation of the male human being which is a great puzzle to the anatomists, and reminds us of one of Plato's reveries on the original state of mankind. When the Divine Spirit acts, it may act through the medium of human knowledge and will, as well as any other,—as well as through the trunk of a tree in the pushing out of a blossom. New productions are

supposed to appear from time to time in the rest of the creatures : old ones are supposed to have become extinct.

Be this as it may, we are not to conclude that the world always was and always will be such as it is, simply because the little space of time during which we know of its existence offers to us no extraordinary novelty. The humility of a philosopher's ignorance (and there is more humility in his very pride than in the 'prostration of intellect' so earnestly recommended by some persons) is sufficient to guard him against this conclusion, setting aside Plato and the mammoth.

With respect to other animals going to heaven, our pride smiles in a sovereign manner at this speculation. We have no objection, somehow, to a mean origin ; but we insist that nothing less dignified than ourselves can be immortal. I wish I could settle the question. I confess (if the reader will allow me to suppose that I shall go to heaven, which does not require much modesty now-a-days) I would fain have as much company as possible ; and He was of no different opinion who told us that a time should come when the sucking child should play with the asp. We see that the poet

had no more objection to his dog's company in a state of bliss, than the 'poor Indian,' of whom he speaks in his Essay. We think we could name other celebrated authors, who would as lief take their dogs into the next world as a king or a bishop, and yet they have no objection to either. We may conceive much less pleasant additions to our society than a flock of doves, which, indeed, have a certain fitness for an Elysian state. We would confine our argument to one simple question, which the candid reader will allow us to ask him :—'Does not *Tomkins* go to heaven?' Has not the veriest bumpkin of a squire, that rides after the hounds, an immortal soul? If so, why not the whole pack? It may be said, that the pack are too brutal and blood-thirsty: they would require a great deal of improvement. Well, let them have it, and the squire along with them. It has been thought by some that the brutal, or those who are unfit for heaven, will be annihilated. Others conceive that they will be bettered in other shapes. Whatever be the case, it is difficult to think that many beasts and birds are not as fit to go to heaven at once as many human beings,—people who talk of their seats there with as much confidence as if they had booked their

names for them at a box-office. To our humble taste, the goodness and kindness in the countenance of a faithful dog are things that appear almost as fit for heaven as serenity in a human being. The prophets of old, in their visions, saw nothing to hinder them from joining the faces of other animals with those of men. The spirit that moved the animal was everything.

It was the opinion of a late writer, that the immortality of the soul depended on the cultivation of the intellect. He could not conceive how the sots and fools that abound on this earth could have any pretensions to eternity ; or with what feelings they were to enter upon their new condition. There appears to be too much of the pride of intellect in this opinion, and too little allowance for circumstances ; and yet, if the dispensation that is to take us to heaven is of the exclusive kind that some would make it, this is surely the more noble dogma. The other makes it depend on the mere will of the Divinity, or (to speak plainly) upon a system of favouritism, that would render a human tyranny unbearable. I am not here speaking of the mild tenets incalculated by the spirit of the Church of England, but of those of certain sects. In neither case would

the majority of us have much better pretensions to go to heaven than the multitude of other animals ; nor, perhaps, a jot more, if we knew all their thoughts and feelings. But I wander out of our subject, and grow more positive than becomes a waking dream.

To conclude with the pleasant animals with whom we commenced, there is a flock of pigeons in the neighbourhood where we are writing,* whom I would willingly suppose to be enjoying a sort of heaven on earth. The place is fit to be their paradise. There is plenty of food for them, the dove-cots are excellent, the scene full of vines in summer-time, and of olives all the year round. It happens, in short, to be the very spot where Boccaccio is said to have laid the scene of his *Decameron*. He lived there himself. Fiesole is on the height ; the Valley of Ladies in the hollow ; the brooks all poetical and celebrated. As we behold this flock of doves careering about the hamlet, and whitening in and out of the green trees, we cannot help fancying that they are the souls of the gentle company in the *Decameron*, come to enjoy in peace their old neighbourhood. We think, as we look at them, that they are now as free from intrusion and scandal as

* At Maiano, near Florence. [L. H.]

they are innocent ; and that no falcon would touch them for the sake of the story they told of him.

Ovid, in one of his elegies, tells us that birds have a Paradise near Elysium. Doves, be sure are not omitted. But peacocks and parrots go there also. The poet was more tolerant in his *orni-theology* than the priests in Delphos, who, in the sacred groves about their temple, admitted doves, and doves only.

WATCHMEN

[From the *Companion*, 1820]

THE readers of these our lucubrations need not be informed that we keep no carriage. The consequence is, that being visitors of the theatre, and having some inconsiderate friends who grow pleasanter and pleasanter till one in the morning, we are great walkers home by night ; and this has made us great acquaintances of watchmen, moonlight, *mud-light*, and other accompaniments of that interesting hour. Luckily we are fond of a walk by night. It does not always do us good ; but that is not the fault of the hour, but our own, who ought to be stouter ; and therefore we extract what good we can out of our necessity, with becoming temper. It

is a remarkable thing in nature, and one of the good-naturedest things we know of her, that the mere fact of looking about us, and being conscious of what is going on, is its own reward, if we do but notice it in good-humour. Nature is a great painter (and art and society are among her works), to whose minutest touches the mere fact of becoming alive is to enrich the stock of our enjoyments.

We confess there are points liable to cavil in a walk home by night in February. Old umbrellas have their weak sides ; and the quantity of mud and rain may surmount the picturesque. Mistaking a soft piece of mud for hard, and so filling your shoe with it, especially at setting out, must be acknowledged to be ‘aggravating.’ But then you ought to have boots. There are sights, indeed, in the streets of London, which can be rendered pleasant by no philosophy ; things too grave to be talked about in our present paper ; but we must premise, that our walk leads us out of town, and through streets and suburbs of by no means the worst description. Even there, we may be grieved if we will. The farther the walk into the country, the more tiresome we may choose to find it ; and when we take it purely

to oblige others, we must allow, as in the case of a friend of ours, that generosity itself on two sick legs may find limits to the notion of virtue being its own reward, and reasonably 'curse those comfortable people' who, by the lights in their windows, are getting into their warm beds, and saying to one another, 'Bad thing to be out of doors to-night.'

Supposing, then, that we are in a reasonable state of health and comfort in other respects, we say that a walk home at night has its merits, if you choose to meet with them. The worst part of it is the setting out ; the closing of the door upon the kind faces that part with you. But their words and looks, on the other hand, may set you well off. We have known a word last us all the way home, and a look make a dream of it. To a lover, for instance, no walk can be bad. He sees but one face in the rain and darkness ; the same that he saw by the light in the warm room. This ever accompanies him, looking in his eyes ; and if the most pitiable and spoilt face in the world should come between them, startling him with the saddest mockery of love, he would treat it kindly for her sake. But this is a begging of the question. A lover does not walk. He is sensible neither to the pleasures

nor pains of walking, he treads on air ; and in the thick of all that seems inclement has an avenue of light and velvet spread for him, like a sovereign prince.

To resume, then, like men of this world. The advantage of a late hour is, that everything is silent and the people fast in their beds. This gives the whole world a tranquil appearance. Inanimate objects are no calmer than passions and cares now seem to be, all laid asleep. The human being is motionless as the house or the tree ; sorrow is suspended ; and you endeavour to think that love only is awake. Let not readers of true delicacy be alarmed, for we mean to touch profanely upon nothing that ought to be sacred ; and as we are for thinking the best on these occasions, it is of the best love we think ; love of no heartless order, and such only as ought to be awake with the stars.

As to cares and curtain-lectures, and such-like abuses of the tranquility of night, we call to mind, for their sakes, all the sayings of the poets and others about ' balmy sleep,' and the soothing of hurt minds, and the weariness of sorrow, which drops into forgetfulness. The great majority are certainly ' fast as a church ' by the time we speak of ; and for the rest, we are among the workers

who have been sleepless for their advantage ; so we take out our licence to forget them for the time being. The only thing that shall remind us of them is the red lamp, shining afar over the apothecary's door ; which, while it does so, reminds us also that there is help for them to be had. I see him now, the pale blinker suppressing the conscious injustice of his anger at being roused by the apprentice, and fumbling himself out of the house, in hoarseness and great-coat, resolved to make the sweetness of the Christmas bill indemnify him for the bitterness of the moment.

But we shall be getting too much into the interior of the houses. By this time the hackney-coaches have all left the stands—a good symptom of their having got their day's money. Crickets are heard, here and there, amidst the embers of some kitchen. A dog follows us. Will nothing make him 'go along?' We dodge him in vain ; we run ; we stand and 'hish !' at him, accompanying the prohibition with dehortatory gestures, and an imaginary picking up of a stone. We turn again, and there he is vexing our skirts. He even forces us into an angry doubt whether he will not starve, if we do not let him go home with us. Now

if we could but lame him without being cruel ; or if we were only an overseer, or a beadle, or a dealer in dog-skin ; or a political economist, to think dogs unnecessary. Oh ! come, he has turned a corner, he has gone ; we think we see him trotting off at a distance, thin and muddy, and our heart misgives us. But it was not our fault ; we were not ‘hishing’ at the time. His departure was lucky, for he had got our enjoyments into a dilemma ; our ‘article’ would not have known what to do with him. These are the perplexities to which your sympathisers are liable. We resume our way, independent and alone ; for we have no companion this time, except our never-to-be-forgotten and ethereal companion, the reader. A real arm within another’s puts us out of the pale of walking that is to be made good. It is good already. A fellow-pedestrian is company—is the party you have left ; you talk and laugh, and there is no longer anything to be contended with. But alone, and in bad weather, and with a long way to go, here is something for the temper and spirits to grapple with and turn to account ; and accordingly we are booted and buttoned up, an umbrella over our heads, the rain pelting upon it, and the lamp-light shining in the

gutters ; 'mud-shine,' as an artist of our acquaintance used to call it, with a gusto of reprobation. Now, walk cannot well be worse ; and yet it shall be nothing if you meet it heartily. There is a pleasure in overcoming obstacles ; mere action is something ; imagination is more ; and the spinning of the blood, and vivacity of the mental endeavour, act well upon one another, and gradually put you in a state of robust consciousness and triumph. Every time you set down your leg, you have a respect for it. The umbrella is held in the hand like a roaring trophy.

We are now reaching the country : the fog and rain are over ; and we meet our old friends the watchmen, staid, heavy, indifferent, more coat than man, pondering, yet not pondering, old but not reverend, immensely useless. No ; useless they are not ; for the inmates of the houses think them otherwise, and in that imagination they do good. We do not pity the watchmen as we used. Old age often cares little for regular sleep. They could not be sleeping perhaps if they were in their beds ; and certainly they would not be earning. What sleep they get is perhaps sweeter in the watch-box,—a forbidden sweet ; and they have a sense of importance,

and a claim on the persons in-doors, which, together with the amplitude of their coating, and the possession of the box itself, make them feel themselves, not without reason, to be 'somebody.' They are peculiar and official. Tomkins is a cobbler as well as they; but then he is no watchman. He cannot speak to 'things of night'; nor bid 'any man stand in the king's name.' He does not get fees and gratitude from the old, the infirm, and the drunken; nor let 'gentlemen go'; nor is he 'a parishman.' The churchwardens don't speak to him. If he put himself ever so much in the way of 'the great plumber,' he would not say, 'How do you find yourself, Tomkins?'—'An ancient and quiet watchman.' Such he was in the time of Shakespeare, and such he is now. Ancient, because he cannot help it; and quiet, because he will not help it, if possible; his object being to procure quiet on all sides, his own included. For this reason he does not make too much noise in crying the hour, nor is offensively particular in his articulation. No man shall sleep the worse for him, out of a horrid sense of the word 'three.' The sound shall be three, four, or one, as suits their mutual convenience.

Yet characters are to be found even among

watchmen. They are not all mere coat, and lump, and indifference. By-the-way, what do they think of in general? How do they vary the monotony of their ruminations from one to two, and from two to three, and so on? Are they comparing themselves with the unofficial cobbler; thinking of what they shall have for dinner to-morrow; or what they were about six years ago; or that their lot is the hardest in the world, as insipid old people are apt to think, for the pleasure of grumbling; or that it has some advantages nevertheless, besides fees; and that if they are not in bed, their wife is?

Of characters, or rather varieties among watchmen, we remember several. One was a Dandy Watchman, who used to ply at the top of Oxford Street, next the park. We called him the dandy, on account of his utterance. He had a mincing way with it, pronouncing the *a* in the word 'past' as it is in *hat*, making a little preparatory hem before he spoke, and then bringing out his 'past ten' in a style of genteel indifference; as if, upon the whole, he was of that opinion.

Another was the Metallic Watchman, who paced the same street towards Hanover Square, and had a clang in his voice like a

trumpet. He was a voice and nothing else ; but any difference is something in a watchman.

A third, who cried the hour in Bedford Square, was remarkable in his calling for being abrupt and loud. There was a fashion among his tribe just come up at that time, of omitting the words 'past' and 'o'clock,' and crying only the number of the hour. I know not whether a recollection I have of his performance one night is entire matter of fact, or whether any subsequent fancies of what might have taken place are mixed up with it ; but my impression is, that as I was turning the corner into the square with a friend, and was in the midst of a discussion in which numbers were concerned, we were suddenly startled, as if in solution of it, by a brief and tremendous outcry of—ONE. This paragraph ought to have been at the bottom of the page, and the word printed abruptly round the corner.

A fourth watchman was a very singular phenomenon, a *Reading Watchman*. He had a book, which he read by the light of his lantern ; and instead of a pleasant, gave you a very uncomfortable idea of him. It seemed cruel to pitch amidst so many discomforts and privations one who had imagination enough to wish to be relieved from them.

Nothing but a sluggish vacuity befit the watchman. ive

But the oddest of all was the *Sliding* Watchman. Think of walking up a street in the depth of a frosty winter, with long ice in the gutters, and sleet overhead, and then figure to yourself a sort of bale of a man in white coming sliding towards you with a lantern in one hand, and an umbrella over his head. It was the oddest mixture of luxury and hardship, of juvenility and old age ! But this looked agreeable. Animal spirits carry everything before them ; and our invincible friend seemed a watchman for Rabelais. Time was run at and butted by him like a goat. The slide seemed to bear him half through the night at once ; he slipped from out of his box and his common-places at one rush of a merry thought, and seemed to say, ‘Everything’s in imagination ; —here goes the whole weight of my office.’

But we approach our home. How still the trees ! How deliciously asleep the country ! How beautifully grim and nocturnal this wooded avenue of ascent against the cold white sky ! The watchmen and patrols, which the careful citizens have planted in abundance within a mile of their doors, salute us with their ‘Good mornings’ ;—

I FIGH HUNT

trumpet as we pretend ; for we but are not to be out so late ; and it is one of the assumptions of these fatherly old fellows to remind us of it. Some fowls, who have made a strange roost in a tree, flutter as we pass them ; another pull up the hill, unyielding ; a few strides on a level ; and *there* is the light in the window, the eye of the warm soul of the house—one's home. How particular, and yet how universal, is that word ; and how surely does it deposit every one for himself in his own nest !

ON THE GRACES AND ANXIETIES OF PIG-DRIVING

[One of Leigh Hunt's best and most characteristic pieces of work. It is sometimes compared, by reason of the association of ideas in the title with Lamb's *Essay on Roast Pig*, and has been published in a brochure together with it. Its greater natural gaiety and sense of the whimsical give it an advantage over Lamb's well-known but rather over-praised essay. Concerning the following piece, Carlyle wrote to Hunt from Scotland on April 8th 1834, that the paper was 'a most tickling thing ; not a word of which I can remember, only the whole *fact* of it pictured in such subquizzical, sweet acid geniality of mockery—stands here, and among smaller things will stand.']

FROM the perusal of this article we beg leave to warn off vulgar readers of all denomina-

tions, whether of the 'great vulgar or the small.' Warn, did we say? We drive them off; for Horace tells us that they, as well as pigs, are to be so treated. *Odi profanum vulgus*, says he, *et arceo*. But do thou lend thine ear, gentle shade of Goldsmith, who didst make thy bear-leader denounce 'everything as is low'; and thou, Steele, who didst humanise upon public-houses and puppet-shows; and Fielding, thou whom the great Richardson, less in that matter (and some others) than thyself, did accuse of vulgarity, because thou didst discern natural gentility in a footman, and yet was not to be taken in by the airs of Pamela and my Lady G.

The title is a little startling; but 'style and sentiment,' as a lady said, 'can do anything.' Remember, then, gentle reader, that talents are not to be despised in the humblest walks of life; we will add, nor in the muddiest. The other day we happened to be among a set of spectators who could not help stopping to admire the patience and address with which a pig-driver huddled and cherished onward his drove of unaccommodating *élèves*, down a street in the suburbs. He was a born genius for a manœuvre. Had he originated in a higher

sphere he would have been a general, or a stage-manager, or, at least, the head of a set of monks. Conflicting interests were his forte ; pig-headed wills, and proceedings hopeless. To see the *hand* with which he did it ! How hovering, yet firm ; how encouraging, yet compelling ; how indicative of the space on each side of him, and yet of the line before him ; how general, how particular, how perfect ! No barber's could quiver about a head with more lightness of apprehension ; no cook's pat up and proportion the side of a pasty with a more final eye. The whales, quoth old Chapman, speaking of Neptune,

The whales exulted under him, and knew their mighty king.

The pigs did not exult, but they knew their king. Unwilling was their subjection, but 'more in sorrow than in anger.' They were too far gone for rage. Their case was hopeless. They did not see why they should proceed, but they felt themselves bound to do so ; forced, conglomerated, crowded onwards, irresistibly impelled by fate and Jenkins. Often would they have bolted under any other master. They squeaked and grunted as in ordinary ; they sidled,

they shuffled, they half stopped ; they turned an eye to all the little outlets of escape ; but in vain. There they stuck (for their very progress was a sort of sticking), charmed into the centre of his sphere of action, laying their heads together, but to no purpose ; looking all as if they were shrugging their shoulders, and eschewing the tip-end of the whip of office. Much eye had they to their left leg ; shrewd backward glances ; not a little anticipative squeak and sudden rush of avoidance. It was a superfluous clutter, and they felt it ; but a pig finds it more difficult than any other animal to accommodate himself to circumstances. Being out of his pale, he is in the highest state of wonderment and inaptitude. He is sluggish, obstinate, opinionate, not very social ; has no desire of seeing foreign parts. Think of him in a multitude, forced to travel, and wondering what the devil it is that drives him. Judge by this of the talents of his driver.

We beheld a man once, an inferior genius, inducting a pig into the other end of Long Lane, Smithfield. He had got him thus far towards the market. It was much. His air announced success in nine parts out of ten, and hope for the remainder. It had been a happy morning's work ; he had only

to look for the termination of it ; and he looked (as a critic of an exalted turn of mind would say) in brightness and in joy. Then would he go to the public-house, and indulge in porter and a pleasing security. Perhaps he would not say much at first, being oppressed with the greatness of his success ; but by degrees, especially if interrogated, he would open, like Æneas, into all the circumstances of his journey and the perils that beset him. Profound would be his set out ; full of tremor his middle course ; high and skilful his progress ; glorious, though with a quickened pulse, his triumphant entry. Delicate had been his situation in Ducking Pond Row ; masterly his turn at Bell Alley. We saw him with the radiance of some such thought on his countenance. He was just entering Long Lane. A gravity came upon him, as he steered his touchy convoy into this his last thoroughfare. A dog moved him into a little agitation, darting along ; but he resumed his course, not without a happy trepidation, hovering as he was on the borders of triumph. The pig still required care. It was evidently a pig with all the peculiar turn of mind of his species ; a fellow that would not move faster than he could help ; irritable, retrospective ; picking

objections, and prone to boggle ; a c r-cloth a tendency to take every path but the proper one, and with a sidelong tact for the alleys.

He bolts !

He's off !—*Evasit ! erupit !*

'Oh,' exclaimed the man, dashing his hand against his head, lifting his knee in an agony, and screaming with all the weight of a prophecy which the spectators felt to be too true—'*He'll go up all manner of streets !*'

Poor fellow ! we think of him now sometimes, driving up Duke Street, and not to be comforted in Barbican.

COACHES

[One of Leigh Hunt's most famous essays. This, and *Things Ancient and Modern* are among the longest pieces he wrote in the essay form. *Coaches* was a favourite with Charles Lamb. He joined it with the *Deaths of Little Children* as containing the best of Hunt's work. It appeared in the *Indicator* in 1820. The hero of the Irish post-chaise incident was Shelley. The essay is full of those vivid bits of observation which would have made Leigh Hunt a considerable realistic novelist if he had lived under the influence of that convention.]

ACCORDING to the opinion, commonly entertained respecting an author's want of riches, it may be allowed us to say that we retain from childhood a considerable notion of 'a

to looh a coach.' Nor do we hesitate to 'coilress, that by coach we especially mean a hired one ; from the equivocal dignity of the post-chaise, down to that despised old cast-away, the hackney.

It is true that the carriage, as it is indifferently called (as if nothing less genteel could carry any one), is a more decided thing than the chaise ; it may be swifter even than the mail, leaves the stage at a still greater distance in every respect, and (forgetting what it may come to itself) darts by the poor old lumbering hackney with immeasurable contempt. It rolls with a prouder ease than any other vehicle. It is full of cushions and comfort ; elegantly coloured inside and out ; rich yet neat ; light and rapid, yet substantial. The horses seem proud to draw it. The fat and fair-wigged coachman 'lends his sounding lash,' his arm only in action and that but little, his body well set with its own weight. The footman, in the pride of his nonchalance, holding by the straps behind, and glancing down sideways betwixt his cocked-hat and neckcloth, stands swinging from east to west upon his springy toes. The horses rush along amidst their glancing harness. Spotted dogs leap about them, barking with a princely

superfluity of noise. The hammer-cloth trembles through all its fringe. The paint flashes in the sun. We, contemptuous of everything less convenient, bow backwards and forwards with a certain indifferent air of gentility, infinitely predominant. Suddenly, with a happy mixture of turbulence and truth, the carriage dashes up by the curb-stone to the very point desired, and stops with a lordly wilfulness of decision. The coachman looks as if nothing had happened. The footman is down in an instant; the knocker reverberates into the farthest corner of the house; doors, both carriage and house, are open;—we descend, casting a matter-of-course eye at the bystanders; and the moment we touch the pavement, the vehicle, as if conscious of what it has carried, and relieved from the weight of our importance, recovers from its sidelong inclination with a jerk, tossing and panting, as it were, for very breath, like the proud heads of the horses.

All this, it must be owned, is very pretty; but it is also gouty and superfluous. It is too convenient,—too exacting,—too exclusive. We must get too much for it, and lose too much by it. Its plenty, as Ovid says, makes us poor. We neither

have it in the republic of letters, nor would desire it in any less jacobinical state. Horses, as many as you please, provided men have enough to eat ; hired coaches, a reasonable number :—but health and good-humour at all events.

Gigs and curricles are things less objectionable, because they cannot be so relied upon as substitutes for exercise. Our taste in them, we must confess, is not genuine. How shall we own it ? We like to be driven instead of drive ;—to read or look about us, instead of keeping watch on the horse's head. We have no relish even for vehicles of this description that are not safe. Danger is a good thing for giving a fillip to a man's ideas ; but even danger, to us, must come recommended by something useful. We have no ambition to have TANDEM written on our tombstone.

The prettiest of these vehicles is the curricule, which is also the safest. There is something worth looking at in the pair of horses, with that sparkling pole of steel laid across them. It is like a bar of music, comprising their harmonious course. But to us, even gigs are but a sort of unsuccessful run at gentility. The driver, to all intents and purposes, had better be on the horse.

Horseback is the noblest way of being carried in the world. It is cheaper than any other mode of riding ; it is common to all ranks ; and it is manly, graceful, and healthy. The handsomest mixture of danger with dignity, in the shape of a carriage, was the tall phaeton with its yellow wings. We remember looking up to it with respect in our childhood, partly for its loftiness, partly for its name, and partly for the show it makes in the prints to novels of that period. The most gallant figure which modern driving ever cut was in the person of a late Duke of Hamilton ; of whom we have read or heard somewhere, that he used to dash round the streets of Rome, with his horses panting, and his hounds barking about his phaeton, to the equal fright and admiration of the Masters of the World, who were accustomed to witness nothing higher than a lumbering old coach, or a cardinal on a mule.

A post-chaise involves the idea of travelling, which in the company of those we love is home in motion. The smooth running along the road, the fresh air, the variety of scene, the leafy roads, the bursting prospects, the clatter through a town, the gaping gaze of a village, the hearty appetite, the leisure

(your chaise waiting only upon your own movements), even the little contradictions to home-comfort, and the expedients upon which they set us, all put the animal spirits at work, and throw a novelty over the road of life. If anything could grind us young again, it would be the wheels of a post-chaise. The only monotonous sight is the perpetual up-and-down movement of the postillion, who, we wish exceedingly could take a chair. His occasional retreat to the bar which occupies the place of a box, and his affecting to sit upon it, only remind us of its exquisite want of accommodation. But some have given the bar, lately, a surreptitious squeeze in the middle, and flattened it a little into something obliquely resembling an inconvenient seat.

If we are to believe the merry Columbus of Down-Hall, calashes, now almost obsolete for any purpose, used to be hired for travelling occasions a hundred years back ; but he preferred a chariot ; and neither was good. Yet see how pleasantly good humour rides over its inconveniences.

Then answer'd 'Squire Morley, 'Pray get a calash,
That in summer may burn, and in winter may splash ;
I love dirt and dust ; and 'tis always my pleasure
To take with me much of the soil that I measure.'

But Matthew thought better ; for Matthew thought
right,
And hired a chariot so trim and so tight,
'That extremes both of winter and summer might pass ;
For one window was canvas, the other was glass.

'Draw up,' quoth friend Matthew ; 'Pull down,' quoth
friend John ;
'We shall be both hotter and colder anon.'
Thus, talking and scolding, they forward did speed ;
And Ralpho paced by under Newman the Swede.

Into an old inn did this equipage roll,
At a town they call Hodson, the sign of the Bull ;
Near a nymph with an urn that divides the highway,
And into a puddle throws mother of tea.

'Come here, my sweet landlady, pray how d'ye do ?
Where is Cicely so cleanly, and Prudence, and Sue ?
And where is the widow that dwelt here below ?
And the hostler that sung about eight years ago ?

'And where is your sister, so mild and so dear,
Whose voice to her maids like a trumpet was clear ?'
'By my troth,' she replies, 'you grow younger, I think :
And pray, sir, what wine does the gentleman drink :

'Why now let me die, sir, or live upon trust,
If I know to which question to answer you first :
Why, things, since I saw you, most strangely have varied ;
The hostler is hang'd, and the widow is married.

'And Prue left a child for the parish to nurse,
And Cicely went off with a gentleman's purse ;
And as to my sister, so mild and so dear,
She has lain in the churchyard full many a year.'

‘Well ; peace to her ashes ! What signifies grief ?
She roasted red veal, and she powder’d lean beef :
Full nicely she knew to cook up a fine dish ;
For tough was her pullets, and tender her fish.’—PRIOR.

This quotation reminds us of a little poem by the same author, entitled the *Secretary*, which, as it is short, and runs upon chaise-wheels, and seems to have slipped the notice it deserves, we will do ourselves the pleasure of adding. It was written when he was Secretary of Embassy at the Hague, where he seems to have edified the Dutch with his insisting upon enjoying himself. The astonishment with which the good Hollander and his wife look up to him as he rides, and the touch of yawning dialect at the end, are extremely pleasant.

While with labour assiduous due pleasure I mix,
And in one day atone for the business of six,
In a little Dutch chaise on a Saturday night,
On my left hand my Horace, a nymph on my right :
No Memoirs to compose, and no Post-boy to move,
That on Sunday may hinder the softness of love ;
For her, neither visits, nor parties at tea,
Nor the long-winded cant of a dull Refugee :
This night and the next shall be hers, shall be mine,—
To good or ill-fortune the third we resign :
Thus scorning the world and superior to fate,
I drive on my car in processional state.
So with Phia through Athens Pisistratus rode ;
Men thought her Minerva, and him a new god.

But why should I stories of Athens rehearse,
Where people knew love, and were partial to verse ?
Since none can with justice my pleasures oppose,
In Holland half drowned in interest and prose ?
By Greece and past ages what need I be tried,
When the Hague and the present are both on my side ?
And is it enough for the joys of the day,
To think what Anacreon or Sappho would say ?
When good Vandergoes, and his provident *wrow*,
As they gaze on my triumph, do freely allow,
That, search all the province, you'll find no man *dár* is
So blest as the *Englischen Heer Secretar*' is.

If Prior had been living now, he would have found the greatest want of travelling accommodation in a country for whose more serious wants we have to answer, without having her wit to help us to an excuse. There is a story told of an Irish post-chaise, the occupier of which, without quitting it, had to take to his heels. It was going down hill as fast as wind and the impossibility of stopping could make it, when the foot passengers observed a couple of legs underneath, emulating, with all their might, the rapidity of the wheels. The bottom had come out ; and the gentleman was obliged to run for his life.

We must relate another anecdote of an Irish post-chaise, merely to show the natural tendencies of the people to be lawless in

self-defence. A friend of ours, who was travelling among them, used to have this proposition put to him by the postillion whenever he approached a turnpike—‘Plase your honour, will I drive at the pike?’ The pike hung loosely across the road. Luckily, the rider happened to be of as lawless a turn for justice as the driver, so the answer was always a cordial one—‘Oh yes—drive at the pike.’ The pike made way accordingly; and in a minute or two the gate people were heard and seen, screaming in vain after the illegal charioteers.

Fertur equis auriga, neque audit currus.—VIRGIL.

The driver’s borne beyond their swearing,
And the post-chaise is hard of hearing.

As to following them, nobody in Ireland thinks of moving too much, legal or illegal.

The pleasure to be had in a mail-coach is not so much at one’s command as that in a post-chaise. There is generally too little room in it, and too much hurry out of it. The company must not lounge over their breakfast, even if they are all agreed. It is an understood thing that they are to be uncomfortably punctual. They must get in

at seven o'clock, though they are all going upon business they do not like or care about, or will have to wait till nine before they can do anything. Some persons know how to manage this haste, and breakfast and dine in the cracking of a whip. They stick with their fork, they joint, they sliver, they bolt. Legs and wings vanish before them like a dragon's before a knight-errant. But if one is not a clergyman or a regular jolly fellow, one has no chance this way. To be diffident or polite is fatal. It is a merit eagerly acknowledged, and as quickly set aside. At last you begin upon a leg, and are called off.

A very troublesome degree of science is necessary for being well settled in the coach. We remember travelling in our youth, upon the north road, with an orthodox elderly gentleman of venerable peruke, who talked much with a grave-looking young man about universities, and won our inexperienced heart with a notion that he was deep in Horace and Virgil. He was deeper in his wig. Towards evening, as he seemed restless, we asked with much indifference whether a change, even for the worse, might not relieve him; for we were riding backwards, and thought that all elderly people

disliked that way. He insinuated the very objection ; so we recoiled from asking him again. In a minute or two, however, he insisted that we were uneasy ourselves, and that he must relieve us for our own sake. We protested as filially as possibly against this ; but at last, out of mere shame of disputing the point with so benevolent an elder, we changed seats with him. After an interval of bland meditation, we found the evening sun full in our face. His new comfort set him dozing ; and every now and then he jerked his wig in our eyes, till we had the pleasure of seeing him take out a nightcap and look very ghastly. The same person, and his serious young companion, tricked us out of a good bed we happened to get at the inn.

The greatest peculiarity attending a mail-coach arises from its travelling at night. The gradual decline of talk, the incipient snore, the rustling and shifting of legs and nightcaps, the cessation of other noises on the road—the sound of the wind or rain, of the moist circuit of the wheels, and of the time-beating tread of the horses—all dispose the traveller, who cannot sleep, to a double sense of the little that is left him to observe. The coach stops, the door opens,

a rush of cold air announces the demands and merits of the guard, who is taking his leave, and is anxious to remember us. The door is clapped to again ; the sound of everything outside becomes dim ; and voices are heard knocking up the people of the inn, and answered by issuing yawns and excuses. Wooden shoes clog heavily about. The horses' mouths are heard swilling the water out of the tubs. All is still again, and someone in the coach takes a long breath. The driver mounts, and we resume our way. It happens that we can sleep anywhere except in a mail-coach ; so that we hate to see a prudent, warm, old fellow, who has been eating our fowls and intercepting our toast, put on his night-cap in order to settle himself till morning. We rejoice in the digs that his neighbour's elbow gives him, and hail the long-legged traveller that sits opposite. A passenger of our wakeful description must try to content himself with listening to the sounds above mentioned ; or thinking of his friends ; or turning verses, as Sir Richard Blackmore did, 'to the rumbling of his coach's wheels.'

The stage-coach is a great and unpretending accommodation. It is a cheap substitute, notwithstanding all its eighteen-penny and

two-and-sixpenny temptations, for keeping a carriage or a horse ; and we really think, in spite of its gossiping, is no mean help to village liberality ; for its passengers are so mixed, so often varied, so little yet so much together, so compelled to accommodate, so willing to pass a short time pleasantly, and so liable to the criticism of strangers, that it is hard if they do not get a habit of speaking, or even thinking more kindly of one another than if they mingled less often, or under other circumstances. The old and infirm are treated with reverence ; the ailing sympathised with ; the healthy congratulated ; the rich not distinguished ; the poor well met ; the young, with their faces conscious of pride, patronised, and allowed to be extra. Even the fiery, nay the fat, learn to bear with each other ; and if some high-thoughted persons will talk now and then of their great acquaintances, or their preference of a carriage, there is an instinct which tells the rest that they would not make such appeals to their good opinion if they valued it so little as might be supposed. Stoppings and dust are not pleasant, but the latter may be had on grander occasions ; and if anyone is so unlucky as never to keep another stopping himself, he

must be content with the superiority of his virtue.

The mail or stage-coachman, upon the whole, is no inhuman mass of great-coat, gruffness, civility, and old boots. The latter is the politer, from the smaller range of acquaintance, and his necessity for preserving them. His face is red, and his voice rough, by the same process of drink and catarrh. He has a silver watch with a steel-chain, and plenty of loose silver in his pocket, mixed with halfpence. He serves the houses he goes by for a clock. He takes a glass at every alehouse ; for thirst, when it is dry, and for warmth when it is wet. He likes to show the judicious reach of his whip, by twiggling a dog or a goose on the road, or children that get in the way. His tenderness to descending old ladies is particular. He touches his hat to Mr Smith. He gives 'the young woman' a ride, and lends her his box-coat in the rain. His liberality in imparting his knowledge to any one that has the good fortune to ride on the box with him is a happy mixture of deference, conscious possession, and familiarity. His information chiefly lies in the occupancy of houses on the road, prize-fighters, Bow Street runners, and accidents. He concludes

that you know Dick Sams, or Old Joey, and proceeds to relate some of the stories that relish his pot and tobacco in the evening. If any of the four-in-hand gentry go by, he shakes his head, and thinks they might find something better to do. His contempt for them is founded on modesty. He tells you that his off-hand horse is as pretty a goer as ever was, but that Kitty—‘Yeah, now there, Kitty, can’t you be still? Kitty’s a devil, sir, for all you wouldn’t think it.’ He knows that the boys on the road admire him, and gives the horses an indifferent lash with his whip as they go by. If you wish to know what rain and dust can do, you should look at his old hat. There is an indescribably placid and paternal look in the position of his corduroy knees and old top-boots on the foot-board, with their pointed toes and never-cleaned soles. His *beau-idéal* of appearance is a frock-coat, with mother-o’-pearl buttons, a striped yellow waistcoat, and a flower in his mouth.

But all our praises why for Charles and Robert?
Rise, honest Mews, and sing the classic Bobart.

Is the quadrijugal virtue of that learned person still extant? That Olympic and Baccalaureated charioteer?—That best edu-

cated and most erudite of coachmen, of whom Dominie Sampson is alone worthy to speak? That singular punning and driving commentary on the *Sunt quos curriculo collegisse*? In short, the worthy and agreeable Mr Bobart, Bachelor of Arts, who drove the Oxford stage some years ago, capped verses and the front of his hat with equal dexterity, and read Horace over his brandy-and-water of an evening? We had once the pleasure of being beaten by him in that capital art, he having brought up against us an unusual number of those cross-armed letters, as puzzling to verse-cappers as iron-cats unto cavalry, ycleped X's; which said warfare he was pleased to call to mind in after times, unto divers of our comrades. The modest and natural greatness with which he used to say 'Yait' to his horses, and then turn round with his rosy gills, and an eye like a fish, and give out the required verse, can never pass away from us, as long as verses or horses run.

Of the hackney-coach we cannot make as short work as many persons like to make of it in reality. Perhaps it is partly a sense of the contempt it undergoes, which induces us to endeavour to make the best of it. But it has its merits, as we shall show

presently. In the account of its demerits we have been anticipated by a new, and we are sorry to say a very good, poetess, of the name of Lucy V—— L——, who has favoured us with a sight of a manuscript poem, in which they are related with great nicety and sensitiveness.

Reader. What, sir, sorry to say that a lady is a good poetess?

Indicator. Only inasmuch, madam, as the lady gives such authority to the antisocial view of this subject, and will not agree with us as to the beatitude of the hackney-coach.—But hold :—upon turning to the manuscript again, we find that the objections are put into the mouth of a dandy courtier. This makes a great difference. The hackney resumes all which it had lost in the good graces of the fair authoress. The only wonder is, how the courtier could talk so well. Here is the passage :—

Eban, untempted by the Pastry-cooks
 (Of Pastry he got store within the Palace),
 With hasty steps, wrapp'd cloak, and solemn looks,
 Incognito upon his errand sallies ;
 His smelling-bottle ready for the alleys ;
 He pass'd the Hurdy-gurdies with disdain,
 Vowing he'd have them sent on board the galleys :
 Just as he made his vow, it 'gan to rain,
 Therefore he call'd a coach, and bade it drive amain.

‘I’ll pull the string,’ said he, and further said,
‘Polluted Jarvey ! Ah, thou filthy hack !
Whose strings of life are all dried up and dead,
Whose linsey-wolsey lining hangs all slack,
Whose rug is straw, whose wholeness is a crack ;
And evermore thy steps go clatter-clitter ;
Whose glass once up can never be got back,
Who prov’st, with jolting arguments and bitter,
That ’tis of vile no-use to travel in a litter.

‘Thou inconvenience ! thou hungry crop
For all corn ! thou snail-creeper to and fro,
Who while thou goest ever seem’st to stop,
And fiddle-faddle standest while you go ;
I’ the morning, freighted with a weight of woe,
Unto some Lazar-house thou journiest,
And in the evening tak’st a double row
Of dowdies, for some dance or party drest,
Besides the goods meanwhile thou movest east and west.

‘By thy ungallant bearing and sad mien,
An inch appears the utmost thou couldst budge ;
Yet at the slightest nod, or hint, or sign,
Round to the curb-stone patient dost thou trudge,
School’d in a beckon, learned in a nudge ;
A dull-eyed Argus watching for a fare ;
Quiet and plodding, thou dost bear no grudge
To whisking Tilburies or Phaetons rare,
Curricles, or Mail-coaches, swift beyond compare.’

Philosophising thus, he pull’d the check,
And bade the coachman wheel to such a street ;
Who turning much his body, more his neck,
Louted full low, and hoarsely did him greet.

The tact here is so nice of the infirmities which are but too likely to beset our poor old friend, that we should only spoil it to say more. To pass then to the merits.

One of the greatest helps to a sense of merit in other things is a consciousness of one's own wants. Do you despise a hackney-coach? Get tired; get old; get young again. Lay down your carriage, or make it less uneasily too easy. Have to stand up half-an-hour, out of a storm, under a gateway. Be ill, and wish to visit a friend who is worse. Fall in love, and want to sit next your mistress. Or if all this will not do, fall in a cellar.

Ben Jonson, in a fit of indignation at the niggardliness of James the First, exclaimed, 'He despises me, I suppose, because I live in an alley:—tell him his soul lives in an alley.' We think we see a hackney-coach moving out of its ordinary patience, and hear it say, 'You there, who sit looking so scornfully at me out of your carriage, are yourself the thing you take me for. Your understanding is a hackney-coach. It is lumbering, rickety, and at a stand. When it moves, it is drawn by things like itself. It is at once the most stationary and the most servile of common-places. And when

a good thing is put into it, it does not know it.'

But it is difficult to imagine a hackney-coach under so irritable an aspect. Hogarth has drawn a set of hats or wigs with countenances of their own. We have noticed the same thing in the faces of houses ; and it sometimes gets in one's way in a landscape-painting, with the outlines of the rocks and trees. A friend tells us that the hackney-coach has its countenance, with gesticulation besides : and now he has pointed it out, we can easily fancy it. Some of them look chucked under the chin, some nodding, some coming at you sideways. We shall never find it easy, however, to fancy the irritable aspect above mentioned. A hackney-coach always appeared to us the most quiescent of movables. Its horses and it, slumbering on a stand, are an emblem of all patience in creation, animate and inanimate. The submission with which the coach takes every variety of the weather, dust, rain, and wind, never moving but when some eddying blast makes its old body shiver is only surpassed by the vital patience of the horses. Can anything better illustrate the poet's line about

—Years that bring the philosophic mind,
than the still-hung head, the dim indifferent

eye, the dragged and blunt-cornered mouth, and the gaunt imbecility of body dropping its weight on three tired legs in order to give repose to the lame one? When it has blinkers on, they seem to be shutting up its eyes for death, like the windows of a house. Fatigue and the habit of suffering have become as natural to the creature as the bit to its mouth. Once in half-an-hour it moves the position of its leg, or shakes its drooping ears. The whip makes it go, more from habit than from pain. Its coat has become almost callous to minor stings. The blind and staggering fly in autumn might come to die against its cheek.

Of a pair of hackney-coach horses, one so much resembles the other that it seems unnecessary for them to compare notes. They have that within them which is beyond the comparative. They no longer bend their heads towards each other as they go. They stand together as if unconscious of one another's company. But they are not. An old horse misses his companion, like an old man. The presence of an associate, who has gone through pain and suffering with us, need not say anything. It is talk, and memory, and everything. Something of this it may be to our old friends in harness.

What are they thinking of while they stand motionless in the rain? Do they remember? Do they dream? Do they still, unperplexed as their old blood is by too many foods, receive a pleasure from the elements; a dull refreshment from the air and sun? Have they yet a palate for the hay which they pull so feebly? or for the rarer grain which induces them to perform their only voluntary gesture of any vivacity, and toss up the bags that are fastened on their mouths, to get at its shallow feast?

If the old horse were gifted with memory (and who shall say he is not, in one thing as well as another?), it might be at once the most melancholy and pleasantest faculty he has; for the commonest hack has probably been a hunter or racer; has had his days of lustre and enjoyment; has darted along the course, and scoured the pasture; has carried his master proudly, or his lady gently; has pranced, has galloped, has neighed aloud, has dared, has forded, has spurned at mastery, has graced it and made it proud, has rejoiced the eye, has been crowded to as an actor, has been all instinct with life and quickness, has had his very fear admired as courage, and been sat upon by valour as its chosen seat.

His ears up-prick'd ; his braided hanging mane
Upon his compass'd crest now stands on end ;
His nostrils drink the air ; and forth again,
As from a furnace, vapours doth he send ;
 His eye, which scornfully glistens like fire,
 Shows his hot courage and his high desire.

Sometimes he trots as if he told the steps,
With gentle majesty, and modest pride ;
Anon he rears upright, curvets and leaps,
As who would say, lo ! thus my strength is tried,
 And thus I do to captivate the eye
 Of the fair breeder that is standing by.

What recketh he his rider's angry stir,
His flattering holla, or his *Stand, I say* ?
What cares he now for curb, or pricking spur ?
For rich caparisons, or trappings gay ?
 He sees his love, and nothing else he sees,
 For nothing else with his proud sight agrees.

Look, when a painter would surpass the life,
In limning out a well-proportion'd steed,
His art with nature's workmanship at strife,
As if the dead the living should exceed ;
 So did this horse excel a common one,
 In shape, in courage, colour, pace, and bone.

Round-hoof'd, short-jointed, fetlock shag and long,
Broad breast, full eyes, small head, and nostril wide ;
High crest, short ears, straight legs, and passing strong ;
Thin mane, thick tail, broad buttock, tender hide ;
 Look, what a horse should have, he did not lack,
 Save a proud rider on so proud a back.

Alas? his only riders now are the rain and a sordid harness? The least utterance of the wretchedest voice makes him stop and become a fixture. His loves were in existence at the time the old sign, fifty miles hence, was painted. His nostrils drink nothing but what they cannot help,—the water out of an old tub. Not all the hounds in the world could make his ears attain any eminence. His mane is scratchy and lax. The same great poet who wrote the triumphal verses for him and his loves, has written their living epitaph :—

The poor jades
Lob down their heads, dropping the hide and hips
The gum down roping from their pale dead eyes ;
And in their pale dull mouths the gimmel bit
Lies foul with chew'd grass, still and motionless.

—*K. Henry V. Act I.*

There is a song called the ‘High-mettled Racer,’ describing the progress of a favourite horse’s life, from its time of vigour and glory, down to its furnishing food for the dogs. It is not as good as Shakespeare ; but it will do to those who are half as kind as he. We defy anybody to read that song, or be in the habit of singing it or hearing it sung, and treat horses as they are sometimes treated. So much good may an author do,

who is in earnest, and does not go in a pedantic way to work. We will not say that Plutarch's good-natured observation about taking care of one's old horse did more for that class of retired servants than all the graver lessons of philosophy. For it is philosophy which first sets people thinking; and then some of them put it in a more popular shape. But we will venture to say that Plutarch's observation saved many a steed of antiquity a superfluous thump; and in this respect the author of the 'High-mettled Racer' (Mr Dibdin we believe, no mean man in his way) may stand by the side of the old illustrious biographer. Next to ancient causes, to the inevitable progress of events, and to the practical part of Christianity (which persons the most accused of irreligion, have preserved like a glorious infant, through ages of blood and fire) the kindliness of modern philosophy is more immediately owing to the great national writers of Europe, in whose schools we have all been children:—to Voltaire in France, and Shakespeare in England. Shakespeare in his time, obliquely pleaded the cause of the Jew, and got him set on a common level with humanity. The Jew has since been not only allowed to be human

but some have undertaken to show him as the 'best good Christian though he knows it not.' We shall not dispute the title with him, nor with the other worshippers of Mammon, who force him to the same shrine. We allow, as things go in that quarter, that the Jew is as great a Christian as his neighbour, and his neighbour as great a Jew as he. There is neither love nor money lost between them. But, at all events, the Jew is a man; and with Shakespeare's assistance the time has arrived when we can afford to acknowledge the horse for a fellow-creature, and treat him as one. We may say for him upon the same grounds and to the same purpose, as Shakespeare said for the Israelite, 'Hath not a horse organs, dimensions, senses, affections, passions? hurt with the same weapons, subject to the same diseases, healed by the same means, warmed and cooled by the same winter and summer, as a Christian is!' Oh—but some are always at hand to cry out—it would be effeminate to think too much of these things!—Alas! we have no notion of asking the gentlemen to think too much of anything. If they will think at all, it will be a great gain. As to effeminacy (if we must use that ungallant and partial word, for want of

a better) it is cruelty that is effeminate. It is selfishness that is effeminate. Anything is effeminate which would get an excitement, or save a proper and manly trouble, at the undue expense of another. How does the case stand then between those who ill-treat their horses and those who spare them ?

To return to the coach. Imagine a fine coach and pair, which are standing at the door of a house, in all the pride of their strength and beauty, converted into what they may both become, a hackney, and its old shamblers. Such is one of the meditations of the philosophic eighteenpenny rider. A hackney-coach has often the arms of nobility on it. As we are going to get into it we catch a glimpse of the faded lustre of an earl's or marquis's coronet, and think how many light and proud hearts have ascended those now rickety steps. In this coach perhaps an elderly lady once rode to her wedding, a blooming and blushing girl. Her mother and sister were on each side of her ; the bridegroom opposite in a blossom-coloured coat. They talk of everything in the world of which they are not thinking. The sister was never prouder of her. The mother with difficulty represses her own pride and tears. The bride, thinking he

is looking at her, casts down her eyes, pensive in her joy. The bridegroom is at once the proudest, and the humblest, and the happiest man in the world. For our parts, we sit in a corner, and are in love with the sister. We dream she is going to speak to us in answer to some indifferent question, when a hoarse voice comes in at the front window and says, 'Whereabouts, sir?'

And grief has consecrated thee, thou reverend dilapidation, as well as joy! Thou hast carried unwilling as well as willing hearts; hearts that have thought the slowest of thy paces too fast; faces that have sat back in a corner of thee, to hide their tears from the very thought of being seen. In thee the destitute have been taken to the poorhouse, and the wounded and sick to the hospital; and many an arm has been round many an insensible waist. Into thee the friend or the lover has hurried, in a passion of tears, to lament his loss. In thee he has hastened to condole the dying or the wretched. In thee the father, or mother, or the older kinswoman, more patient in her years, has taken the little child to the grave, the human jewel that must be parted with.

But joy appears in thee again, like the look-in of the sunshine. If the lover has

gone in thee unwillingly, he has also gone willingly. How many friends hast thou not carried to merry-meetings ! How many young parties to the play ! How many children, whose faces thou hast turned in an instant from the extremity of lachrymose weariness to that of staring delight. Thou hast contained as many different passions in thee as a human heart ; and for the sake of the human heart, old body, thou art venerable. Thou shalt be as respectable as a reduced old gentleman, whose very slovenliness is pathetic. Thou shalt be made gay, as he is over a younger and richer table, and thou shalt be still more touching for the gaiety.

We wish the hackney-coachman were as interesting a machine as either his coach or horses ; but it must be owned, that of all the driving species he is the least agreeable specimen. This is partly to be attributed to the life which has most probably put him into his situation ; partly to his want of outside passengers to cultivate his gentility ; and partly to the disputable nature of his fare, which always leads him to be lying and cheating. The waterman of the stand, who beats him in sordidness of appearance, is more respectable. He is less of a vagabond, and cannot cheat you. Nor is the hackney-

coachman only disagreeable in himself, but, like Falstaff reversed, the cause of disagreeableness in others ; for he sets people upon disputing with him in pettiness and ill-temper. He induces the mercenary to be violent, and the violent to seem mercenary. A man whom you took for a pleasant, laughing fellow, shall all of a sudden put on an irritable look of calculation, and vow that he will be charged with a constable rather than pay the sixpence. Even fair woman shall waive her all-conquering softness, and sound a shrill trumpet in reprobation of the extortionate charioteer, whom, if she were a man, she says, she would expose. Being a woman, then, let her not expose herself. Oh, but it is intolerable to be so imposed upon ! Let the lady, then, get a pocket-book, if she must, with the hackney-coach fares in it ; or a pain in the legs, rather than the temper ; or, above all, let her get wiser, and have an understanding that can dispense with the good opinion of the hackney-coachman. Does she think that her rosy lips were made to grow pale about two-and-sixpence ; or that the expression of them will ever be like her cousin Fanny's if she goes on ?

The stage-coachman likes the boys on the road, because he knows they admire him,

The hackney-coachman knows that they cannot admire him, and that they can get up behind his coach, which makes him very savage. The cry of 'Cut behind !' from the malicious urchins on the pavement wounds at oncè his self-love and his interest. He would not mind overloading his master's horses for another sixpence, but to do it for nothing is what shocks his humanity. He hates the boy for imposing upon him, and the boys for reminding him that he has been imposed upon ; and he would willingly twinge the cheeks of all nine. The cut of his whip over the coach is malignant. He has a constant eye to the road behind him. He has also an eye to what may be left in the coach. He will undertake to search the straw for you, and miss the half-crown on purpose. He speculates on what he may get above his fare, according to your manners or company ; and knows how much to ask for driving faster or slower than usual. He does not like wet weather so much as people suppose ; for he says it rots both his horses and harness, and he takes parties out of town when the weather is fine, which produces good payments in a lump. Lovers, late supper-eaters, and girls going home from boarding-school, are his best pay. He

has a rascally air of remonstrance when you dispute half the overcharge, and according to the temper he is in, begs you to consider his bread, hopes you will not make such a fuss about a trifle ; or tells you, you may take his number or sit in the coach all night.

A great number of ridiculous adventures must have taken place in which hackney-coaches were concerned. The story of the celebrated harlequin Lunn, who secretly pitched himself out of one into a tavern window, and when the coachman was about to submit to the loss of his fare, astonished him by calling out again from the inside, is too well known for repetition. There is one of Swift, not perhaps so common. He was going, one dark evening, to dine with some great man, and was accompanied by some other clergymen, to whom he gave their cue. They were all in their canonicals. When they arrive at the house, the coachman opens the door, and lets down the steps. Down steps the Dean, very reverend in his black robes ; after him comes another personage, equally black and dignified ; then another ; then a fourth. The coachman, who recollects taking up no greater number, is about to put up the steps, when another clergyman descends. After giving way to

this other, he proceeds with great confidence to toss them up, when lo ! another comes. Well, there cannot, he thinks, be more than six. He is mistaken. Down comes a seventh, then an eighth ; then a ninth ; all with decent intervals ; the coach, in the meantime, rocking as if it were giving birth to so many dæmons. The coachman can conclude no less. He cries out ‘The devil ! the devil !’ and is preparing to run away, when they all burst into laughter. They had gone round as they descended, and got in at the other door.

We remember in our boyhood an edifying comment on the proverb of ‘all is not gold that glistens.’ The spectacle made such an impression upon us, that we recollect the very spot, which was at the corner of a road in the way from Westminster to Kennington, near a stone-mason’s. It was a severe winter, and we were out on a holiday, thinking, perhaps, of the gallant hardships to which the ancient soldiers accustomed themselves, when we suddenly beheld a group of hackney-coachmen, not, as Spenser says of his witch,

‘Busy, as *seemed*, about some wicked gin,’

but pledging each other in what appeared to us to be little glasses of cold water. What temperence, thought we ! What

extraordinary and noble content ! What more than Roman simplicity ! Here are a set of poor Englishmen, of the homeliest order, in the very depth of winter, quenching their patient and honourable thirst with modicums of cold water ! O true virtue and courage ! O sight worthy of the Timoleons and Epaminondases ! We know not how long we remained in this error ; but the first time we recognised the white devil for what it was—the first time we saw through the crystal purity of its appearance—was a great blow to us. We did not then know what the drinkers went through and this reminds us that we have omitted one great redemption of the hackney-coachman's character—his being at the mercy of all chances and weathers. Other drivers have their settled hours and pay. He only is at the mercy of every call and every casualty ; he only is dragged, without notice, like the damned in Milton, into the extremities of wet and cold, from his alehouse fire to the freezing rain ; he only must go anywhere, at what hour and to whatever place you choose, his old rheumatic limbs shaking under his weight of rags, and the snow and sleet beating into his puckered face, through streets which the wind scours like a channel.

STORIES

[As a writer of stories, Hunt was not markedly successful. He had but a poor dramatic sense and did not find a way to employ his graceful turns and happy conceits to any particular advantage in this form of art. That his taste, however, did not fail him is evident, for in many of his narrative pieces, there are the germs of wonderful stories—as in the *Daughter of Hippocrates*, for instance—overlaid though they are with a cumbersome affected style and an air of occasional insincerity, born of half-hearted imitation. In writing stories, Hunt seemed to lack the courage of his own style, and to fall back upon the eighteenth century. He seemed afraid or ashamed of his sprightly modern touch when telling a tale. The stories printed here were all first published in periodical form; either in the *Indicator* or the *Companion*. Only one complete volume of Hunt's short stories has been published, that edited by Dr William Knight, in 1891, referred to on page 387 of the Bibliography to this volume. *The Fair Revenge* first appeared in the *Indicator* in 1834. It was a favourite with Shelley.]

THE FAIR REVENGE

AGANIPPUS, king of Argos, dying without heirs male, bequeathed his throne to his only daughter, the beautiful and beloved Daphles. This female succession was displeasing to a nobleman who held large possessions on the frontiers ; and he came for the first time towards the court, not to pay his respects to the new queen, but to give her battle. Doracles (for that was his name) was not much known by the people. He had distinguished himself for as jealous an independence as a subject could well assume ; and though he had been of use in repelling invasion during the latter years of the king, he had never made his appearance to receive his master's thanks personally. A correspondence, however, was understood to have gone on between him and several noblemen about the court ; and there were those who, in spite of his inattention to popularity, suspected that it would go hard with the young queen, when the two armies came face to face.

But neither these subtle statesmen, nor the ambitious young soldier Doracles, were aware of the effects to be produced by a strong personal attachment. The young

queen, amiable as she was beautiful, had involuntarily baffled his expectations from her courtiers, by exciting in the minds of some a real disinterested regard, while others nourished a hope of sharing her throne instead. At least they speculated upon becoming each the favourite minister, and held it a better thing to reign under that title and a charming mistress, than be the servants of a master, wilful and domineering. By the people she was adored ; and when she came riding out of her palace on the morning of the fight, with an unaccustomed spear standing up in its rest by her side, her diademed hair flowing a little off into the wind, her face paler than usual, but still tinted with its roses, and a look in which confidence in the love of her subjects, and tenderness for the wounds they were going to encounter, seemed to contend for the expression, the shout which they sent up would have told a stouter heart than a traitor's that the royal charmer was secure.

The queen, during the conflict, remained in a tent upon an eminence, to which the younger leaders vied who should best spur up their smoking horses, to bring her good news from time to time. The battle was short and bloody. Doracles soon found

that he had miscalculated his point ; and all skill and resolution could not set the error to rights. It was allowed, that if either courage or military talent could entitle him to the throne, he would have a right to it ; but the popularity of Daphles supplied her cause with all the ardour which a lax state of subjection on the part of the more powerful nobles might have denied it. When her troops charged, or made any other voluntary movement, they put all their hearts into their blows ; and when they were compelled to await the enemy, they stood as inflexible as walls of iron. It was like hammering upon metal statuary ; or staking the fated horses upon spears riveted in stone. Doracles was taken prisoner. The queen, re-issuing from her tent, crowned with laurel, came riding down the eminence, and remained at the foot with her generals, while the prisoners were taken by. Her pale face kept as royal a countenance of composed pity as she could manage while the commoner rebels passed along, aching with their wounded arms fastened behind, and shaking back their bloody and blinding locks for want of a hand to part them. But the blood mounted to her cheeks when the proud and handsome Doracles, whom she now saw for the first

time, blushed deeply as he cast a glance at his female conqueror, and then stepped haughtily along, handling his gilded chains as if they were an indifferent ornament. 'I have conquered him,' thought she; 'it is a heavy blow to so proud a head; and as he looks not unamiable, it might be politic, as well as courteous and kind in me, to turn his submission into a more willing one.' Alas! pity was helping admiration to a kinder set of offices than the generous-hearted queen suspected. The captive went to his prison a conqueror after all, for Daphles loved him.

The second night, after having exhibited in her manners a strange mixture of joy and seriousness, and signified to her counsellors her intention of setting the prisoner free, she released him with her own hands. Many a step did she hesitate as she went down the stairs; and when she came to the door, she shed a full, but soft, and, as it seemed to her, a wilful and refreshing flood of tears, humbling herself for her approaching task. When she had entered, she blushed deeply, and then turning as pale, stood for a minute silent and without motion. She then said, 'Thy queen, Doracles, has come to show thee how kindly

she can treat a great and gallant subject, who did not know her'; and with these words, and almost before she was aware, the prisoner was released, and preparing to go. He appeared surprised, but not off his guard, nor in any temper to be over grateful. 'Name,' said he, 'O queen, the conditions on which I depart, and they will be faithfully kept.' Daphles moved her lips, but they spoke not. She waved her head and hand with a deadly smile, as if freeing him from all conditions, and he was turning to go, when she fell senseless on the floor. The haughty warrior raised her with more impatience than good-will. He could guess at love in a woman; but he had a mean opinion both of it and her sex; and the deadly struggle in the heart of Daphles did not help him to distinguish the romantic passion which had induced her to put all her past and virgin notions of love into his person, from the commonest liking that might flatter his soldierly vanity.

The queen, on awaking from her swoon, found herself compelled, in very justice to the intensity of a true passion, to explain how pity had brought it upon her. 'I might ask it,' said she, 'Doracles, in return,' and here she resumed something of her

queen-like dignity ; ‘but I feel that my modesty will be sufficiently saved by the name of your wife ; and a substantial throne, with a return that shall nothing perplex or interfere with thee, I do now accordingly offer thee, not as the condition of thy freedom, but as a diversion of men’s eyes and thoughts from what they will think ill in me, if they find me rejected.’ And in getting out that hard word, her voice faltered a little, and her eyes filled with tears.

Doracles, with the best grace his lately defeated spirit could assume, spoke in willing terms of accepting her offer. They left the prison, and his full pardon having been proclaimed, the courtiers, with feasts and entertainments, vied who should seem best to approve their mistress’s choice, for so they were quick to understand it. The late captive, who was really as graceful and accomplished as a proud spirit would let him be, received and returned all their attention in princely sort, and Daphles was beginning to hope that he might turn a glad eye upon her some day, when news was brought her that he had gone from court nobody knew whither. The next intelligence was too certain. He had passed the frontiers,

and was leaguings with her enemies for another struggle.

From that day gladness, though not kindness, went out of the face of Daphles. She wrote him a letter, without a word of reproach in it, enough to bring back the remotest heart that had the least spark of sympathy ; but he only answered it in a spirit which showed that he regarded the deepest love but as a wanton trifle. That letter touched her kind wits. She had had a paper drawn up, leaving her throne in case she should die ; but some of her ministers, availing themselves of her enfeebled spirit, had summoned a meeting of the nobles, at which she was to preside in the dress she wore on the day of victory, the sight of which, it was thought, with the arguments which they meant to use, would prevail upon the assembly to urge her to a revocation of the bequest. Her women dressed her whilst she was almost unconscious of what they were doing, for she had now begun to fade quickly, body as well as mind. They put on her white garments edged with silver waves, in remembrance of the stream of Inachus, the founder of the Argive monarchy ; the spear was brought out, to be stuck by the side of the throne, instead of the sceptre ; and their

hands prepared to put the same laurel on her head which bound its healthy white temples when she sat on horseback and saw the prisoner go by. But at sight of its twisted and withered green, she took it in her hand, and looking about her in her chair with an air of momentary recollection, began picking it, and letting the leaves fall upon the floor. She went on thus, leaf after leaf, looking vacantly downwards, and when she had stripped the circle half round, she leaned her cheek against the side of her sick chair, and shutting her eyes quietly, so died.

The envoys from Argos went to the court of Calydon, where Doracles then was, and bringing him the diadem upon a black cushion, informed him at once of the death of the queen, and her nomination of him to the throne. He showed little more than a ceremonious gravity at the former news ; but could ill contain his joy at the latter, and set of instantly to take possession. Among the other nobles who feasted him, was one who, having been the companion of the late king, had become like a second father to his unhappy daughter. The new prince observing the melancholy which he scarcely affected to repress, and seeing him look up occasionally at a picture which had a veil over it, asked

him what the picture was that seemed to disturb him so, and why it was veiled. 'If it be the portrait of the late king,' said Doracles, 'pray think me worthy of doing honour to it, for he was a noble prince. Unveil it, pray. I insist upon it. What! am I not worthy to look upon my predecessors, Phorbas?' And at these words he frowned impatiently. Phorbas, with a trembling hand, but not for want of courage, withdrew the black covering; and the portrait of Daphles, in all her youth and beauty, flashed upon the eyes of Doracles. It was not a melancholy face. It was drawn before misfortune had touched it, and sparkled with a blooming beauty, in which animal spirits and good-nature contended for predominance. Doracles paused and seemed struck. 'The possessor of that face,' said he, inquiringly, 'could never have been so sorrowful as I have heard'; 'Pardon me, sir,' answered Phorbas, 'I was as another father to her, and knew all.' 'It cannot be,' returned the prince. The old man begged his other guests to withdraw a while, and then told Doracles how many fond and despairing things the queen had said of him, both before her wits began to fail and after. 'Her wits to fail!' murmured the

king ; ' I have known what it is to feel almost a mad impatience of the will ; but I knew not that these gentle creatures, women, could so feel for such a trifle.' Phorbas brought out the laurel-crown, and told him how the half of it became bare. The impatient blood of Doracles mounted, but not in anger, to his face ; and, breaking up the party, he requested that the picture might be removed to his own chamber, promising to return it.

A whole year, however, did he keep it ; and as he had no foreign enemies to occupy his time, nor was disposed to enter into the common sports of peace, it was understood that he spent the greatest part of his time, when he was not in council, in the room where the picture hung. In truth, the image of the once smiling Daphles haunted him wherever he went ; and to ease himself of the yearning of wishing her alive again and seeing her face, he was in the habit of being with it as much as possible. His self-will turned upon him, even in that gentle shape. Millions of times did he wish back the loving author of his fortunes, whom he had treated with so clownish an ingratitude ; and millions of times did the sense of the impotence of his wish run up

in red hurry to his cheeks, and help to pull them into a gaunt melancholy. But this is not a repaying sorrow to dwell upon. He was one day, after being in vain expected at council, found lying madly on the floor of the room, dead. He had torn the portrait from the wall. His dagger was in his heart, and his cheek lay upon that blooming and smiling face, which, had it been living, would never have looked so at being revenged.

THE DAUGHTER OF HIPPOCRATES

[From the *Indicator*, 1834]

IN the time of the Norman reign in Sicily, a vessel bound from that island to Smyrna was driven by a westerly wind upon the island of Cos. The crew did not know where they were, though they had often visited the island; for the trading towns lay in other quarters, and they saw nothing before them but woods and solitudes. They found, however, a comfortable harbour; and the wind having fallen in the night, they went on shore next morning for water. The country proved as solitary as they thought it; which was the more extraordinary, inasmuch as it was very luxuriant, full of wild figs and grapes, with a rich uneven ground,

and stocked with goats and other animals, who fled whenever they appeared. The bees were remarkably numerous ; so that the wild honey, fruits, and delicious water, especially one spring which fell into a beautiful marble basin, made them more and more wonder, at every step, that they could see no human inhabitants.

Thus idling about and wondering, stretching themselves now and then among the wild thyme and grass, and now getting up to look at some specially fertile place which another called them to see, and which they thought might be turned to fine trading purpose, they came upon a mound covered with trees, which looked into a flat, wide lawn of rank grass, with a house at the end of it. They crept nearer towards the house along the mound, still continuing among the trees, for fear they were trespassing at last upon somebody's property. It had a large garden wall at the back, as much covered with ivy as if it had been built of it. Fruit-trees looked over the wall with an unpruned thickness ; and neither at the back nor front of the house were there any signs of humanity. It was an ancient marble building, where glass was not to be expected in the windows ; but it was much dilapidated,

and the grass grew up over the steps. They listened again and again ; but nothing was to be heard like a sound of men ; nor scarcely of anything else. There was an intense noonday silence. Only the hares made a rustling noise as they ran about the long hiding grass. The house looked like the tomb of human nature amidst the vitality of earth.

‘Did you see?’ said one of the crew, turning pale, and hastening to go. ‘See what?’ said the others. ‘What looked out of the window.’ They all turned their faces towards the house, but saw nothing. Upon this they laughed at their companion, who persisted, however, with great earnestness, and with great reluctance at stopping to say that he saw a strange, hideous kind of face look out of window. ‘Let us go, sir,’ said he, to the Captain ;—‘for I tell ye what : I know this place now : and you, Signor Gaultier,’ continued he, turning to a young man, ‘may now follow that adventure I have often heard you wish to be engaged in.’ The crew turned pale, and Gaultier among them. ‘Yes,’ added the man, ‘we are fallen upon the enchanted part of the island of Cos, where the daughter of —— Hush ! Look there !’ They turned their faces

again, and beheld the head of a large serpent looking out of window. Its eyes were direct upon them ; and stretching out of window, it lifted back its head with little sharp jerks like a fowl ; and so stood keenly gazing.

The terrified sailors would have begun to depart quicklier than they did, had not fear itself made them move slowly. Their legs seemed melting from under them. Gaultier tried to rally his voice. ‘They say,’ said he, ‘it is a gentle creature. The hares that feed right in front of the house are a proof of it ;—let us all stay.’ The others shook their heads, and spoke in whispers, still continuing to descend the mound as well as they could. ‘There is something unnatural in that very thing,’ said the Captain : ‘but we will wait for you in the vessel, if you stay. We will, by St Ermo.’ The Captain had not supposed that Gaultier would stay an instant ; but seeing him linger more than the rest, he added the oath in question, and in the meantime was hastening with the others to get away. The truth is, Gaultier was, in one respect, more frightened than any of them. His legs were more rooted to the spot. But the same force of imagination that helped to detain him, enabled him to

muster up courage beyond those who found their will more powerful : and in the midst of his terror he could not help thinking what a fine adventure this would be to tell in Salerno, even if he did but conceal himself a little, and stay a few minutes longer than the rest. The thought, however, had hardly come upon him, when it was succeeded by a fear still more lively ; and he was preparing to follow the others with all the expedition he could contrive, when a fierce rustling took place in the trees behind him, and in an instant the serpent's head was at his feet. Gaultier's brain as well as heart seemed to sicken, as he thought the monstrous object scented him like a bear ; but despair coming in aid of a courage naturally fanciful and chivalrous, he bent his eyes more steadily, and found the huge jaws and fangs not only abstaining from hurting him, but crouching and fawning at his feet like a spaniel. At the same time he called to mind the old legend respecting the creature, and, corroborated as he now saw it, he ejaculated with good firmness, 'In the name of God and his saints, what art thou ?'

'Hast thou not heard of me ?' answered the serpent in a voice whose singular human slenderness made it seem the more horrible,

‘I guess who thou art,’ answered Gaultier ; — ‘the fearful thing in the island of Cos.’

‘I am that loathly thing,’ replied the serpent ; ‘once not so.’ And Gaultier thought that its voice trembled sorrowfully.

The monster told Gaultier that what was said of her was true ; that she had been a serpent hundreds of years, feeling old age and renewing her youth at the end of each century ; that it was a curse of Diana’s which had changed her ; and that she was never to resume a human form, till somebody was found kind and bold enough to kiss her on the mouth. As she spoke this word, she raised her crest, and sparkled so with her fiery green eyes, dilating at the same time the corners of her jaws, that the young man thrilled through his very scalp. He stepped back, with a look of the utmost horror and loathing. The creature gave a sharp groan inwardly, and after rolling her neck frantically on the ground, withdrew a little back likewise, and seemed to be looking another way. Gaultier heard two or three little sounds as of a person weeping piteously, yet trying to subdue its voice ; and looking with breathless curiosity, he saw the side of the loathly creature’s face bathed in tears.

‘Why speakest thou, lady,’ said he, ‘if

lady thou art, of the curse of the false goddess Diana, who never was, or only a devil? I cannot kiss thee,'—and he shuddered with a horrible shudder as he spoke, 'but I will bless thee in the name of the true God, and even mark thee with his cross.'

The serpent shook her head mournfully, still keeping it turned round. She then faced him again, hanging her head in a dreary and desponding manner. 'Thou knowest not,' said she, 'what I know. Diana both was and never was; and there are many other things on earth which are and yet are not. Thou canst not comprehend it, even though thou art kind. But the heavens alter not, neither the sun nor the strength of nature; and if thou wert kinder, I should be as I once was, happy and human. Suffice it, that nothing can change me but what I said.'

'Why wert thou changed, thou fearful and mysterious thing?' said Gaultier.

'Because I denied Diana, as thou dost,' answered the serpent; 'and it was pronounced an awful crime in me, though it is none in thee; and I was to be made a thing loathsome in men's eyes. Let me not catch thine eye, I beseech thee; but go thy way

and be safe : for I feel a cruel thought coming on me, which will shake my innermost soul, though it shall not harm thee. But I could make thee suffer for the pleasure of seeing thine anguish ; even as some tyrants do : and is that not dreadful ?' And the monster openly shed tears, and sobbed.

There was something in this mixture of avowed cruelty, and weeping contradiction to it, which made Gaultier remain in spite of himself. But fear was still uppermost in his mind when he looked upon the mouth that was to be kissed ; and he held fast round the tree with one hand, and his sword as fast in the other, watching the movements of her neck as he conversed. 'How did thy father, the sage Hippocrates,' asked he, 'suffer thee to come to this ?' 'My father,' replied she, 'sage and good as he was, was but a Greek mortal ; and the great Virgin was a worshipped Goddess. I pray thee, go.' She uttered the last word in a tone of loud anguish ; but the very horror of it made Gaultier hesitate, and he said, 'How can I know that it is not thy destiny to deceive the merciful into this horrible kiss, that then and then only thou mayest devour them ?'

But the serpent rose higher at this, and looking round loftily, said, in a mild and majestic tone of voice, 'O ye green and happy woods, breathing like sleep! O safe and quiet population of these leafy places, dying brief deaths! O sea! O earth! O heavens, never uttering syllable to man! Is there no way to make better known the meaning of your gentle silence, of your long basking pleasures and brief pains? And must the want of what is beautiful and kind from others, ever remain different from what is beautiful and kind in itself? And must form obscure essence; and human confidence in good from within never be bolder than suspicion of evil from without? O ye large-looking and grand benignities of creation, is it that we are atoms in a dream, or that your largeness and benignity are in those only who see them, and that it is for us to hang over ye till we wake you into a voice with our kisses? I yearn to be made beautiful by one kind action, and beauty itself will not believe me!'

Gaultier, though not a foolish youth, understood little or nothing of this mystic apostrophe; but something made him bear in mind, and really incline to believe, that it was a transformed woman speaking to

him ; and he was making a violent eternal effort to conquer his repugnance to the kiss, when some hares, starting from him as they passed, ran and cowered behind the folds of the monster : and she stooped her head, and licked them. ‘By Christ,’ exclaimed he, ‘whom the wormy grave gathered into its arms to save us from our corruptions, I will do this thing ; so may he have mercy on my soul, whether I live or die : for the very hares take refuge in her shadow.’ And shuddering and shutting his eyes, he put his mouth out for her to meet, and he seemed to feel, in his blindness, that dreadful mouth approaching ; and he made the sign of the cross ; and he murmured internally the name of him who cast seven devils out of Mary Magdalen, that afterwards anointed his feet ; and in the midst of his courageous agony he felt a small mouth fast and warm upon his, and a hand about his neck, and another on his left hand ; and opening his eyes, he dropped them upon two of the sweetest that ever looked into the eye of man. But the hares fled ; for they had loved the serpent, but knew not the beautiful human being.

Great was the fame of Gaultier, not only throughout the Grecian islands, but on both

continents ; and most of all in Sicily, where every one of his countrymen thought he had had a hand in the enterprise, for being born on the same soil. The captain and his crew never came again ; for alas ! they had gone off without waiting as they promised. But Tancred, Prince of Salerno, came himself with a knightly train to see Gaultier, who lived with his lady in the same place, all her past sufferings appearing as nothing to her before a month of love ; and even sorrowful habit had endeared it to her. Tancred, and his knights and learned clerks, came in a noble ship, every oar having a painted scutcheon over the rowlock ; and Gaultier and his lady feasted them nobly, and drank to them amidst music in cups of Hippocras—that knightly liquor afterwards so renowned, which she retained the secret of making from her sage father, whose name it bore. And when King Tancred, with a gentle gravity in the midst of his mirth, expressed a hope that the beautiful lady no longer worshipped Diana, Gaultier said, ‘No, indeed, sir’ ; and she looked in Gaultier’s face, as she sat next him, with the sweetest look in the world, as who should say, ‘No, indeed :—I worship thee and thy kind heart.’

THE SHOEMAKER OF VEYROS

[From the *Indicator*, 1819]

IN the time of the old kings of Portugal, Don John, a natural son of the reigning prince, was governor of the town of Veyros, in the province of Alentejo. The town was situate (perhaps is there still) upon a mountain, at the foot of which runs a river ; and a little distance there was a ford over it, under another eminence. The bed of the river thereabouts was so high as to form a shallow sandy place ; and in that clear spot of water the maidens of Veyros, both of high rank and humble, used to wash their clothes.

It happened one day that Don John, riding out with a company, came to the spot at the time the young women were so employed : and being, says our author, ‘a young and lusty gallant,’ he fell to jesting with his followers upon the bare legs of the busy girls, who had tucked up their clothes, as usual, to their work. He passed along the river ; and all his company had not yet gone by, when a lass in a red petticoat, while tucking it up, showed her legs somewhat

high ; and clapping her hand on her right calf, said loud enough to be heard by the riders, 'Here's a white leg, girls, for the Master of Avis.' *

These words, spoken probably out of a little lively bravado, upon the strength of the governor's having gone by, were repeated to him when he got home, together with the action that accompanied them : upon which the young lord felt the eloquence of the speech so deeply, that he contrived to have the fair speaker brought to him in private ; and the consequence was, that our lively natural son, and his sprightly challenger, had another natural son.

Ines (for that was the girl's name) was the daughter of a shoemaker in Veyros ; a man of very good account, and wealthy. Hearing how his daughter had been sent for to the young governor's house, and that it was her own light behaviour which subjected her to what he was assured she willingly consented to, he took it so to heart, that at her return home she was driven by him from the house, with every species of contumely and spurning. After this he never saw her more. And to prove to the

* An order of knighthood, of which Don John was Master.—[L. H.]

world and to himself that his severity was a matter of principle, and not a mere indulgence of his own passions, he never afterwards lay in a bed, nor eat at a table, nor changed his linen, nor cut his hair, nails, or beard ; which latter grew to such a length, reaching below his knees, that the people used to call him Barbadon or Old Beardy.

In the meantime his grandson, called Don Alphonso, not only grew to a man, but was created Duke of Braganza ; his father Don John having been elected to the crown of Portugal ; which he wore after such noble fashion, to the great good of his country, as to be surnamed the Memorable. Now the town of Veyros stood in the middle of seven or eight others, all belonging to the young Duke, from whose place at Villa Viciosa it was but four leagues distant. He therefore had good intelligence of the shoemaker his grandfather ; and being of a humane and truly generous spirit, the account he received of the old man's way of life made him at last extremely desirous of paying him a visit. He accordingly went with a retinue to Veyros ; and meeting Barbadon in the streets, he alighted from his horse, bareheaded ; and in the presence of that stately company and

the people, asked the old man his blessing. The shoemaker, astonished at this sudden spectacle, and at the strange contrast which it furnished to his humble rank, stared in a bewildered manner upon the unknown personage, who thus knelt to him in the public way, and said, 'Sir, do you mock me?' 'No,' answered the Duke; 'may God so help me, as I do not: but in earnest I crave I may kiss your hand and receive your blessing, for I am your grandson, and son to Ines your daughter, conceived by the king, my lord and father.' No sooner had the shoemaker heard these words, than he clapped his hands before his eyes, and said, 'God bless me from ever beholding the son of so wicked a daughter as mine was! And yet, forasmuch as you are not guilty of her offence, hold; take my hand and my blessing, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.' So saying, he laid one of his old hands upon the young man's head, blessing him; but neither the Duke nor his followers could persuade him to take the other away from his eyes, neither would he talk with him a word more. In this spirit, shortly after, he died: and just before his death, he directed a tomb to be made for him, on

which were sculptured the tools belonging to his trade, with this epitaph :—

This sepulchre Barbadon caused to be made,
(Being of Veyros, a shoemaker by his trade)
For himself and the rest of his race,
Excepting his daughter Ines in any case.*

The author says that he has ‘heard it reported by the ancientest persons, that the fourth Duke of Braganza, Don James, son to Donna Isabel, sister to the King Don Emanuel, caused that tomb to be defaced, being the sepulchre of his fourth grandfather.’†

As for the daughter, the conclusion of whose story comes lagging in like a penitent, ‘she continued,’ says the writer, ‘after she was delivered of that son, a very chaste and virtuous woman ; and the king made her commandress of Santos, a most honourable place, and very plentiful, to the which none but princesses were admitted, living, as it were,

* We have retained the homely translation of our informant as most likely to resemble the cast of the original. His account of the story is to be found in the Supplement to the Adventures of Don Sebastian, *Harleian Miscellany*, vol. ii.

† It appears by this that the Don John of the tradition is John the First, who was elected King of Portugal, and became famous for his great qualities ; and that his son by the alleged shoemaker’s daughter was his successor, Alphonso the Fifth.—[L. H.]

abbesses and princesses of a monastery built without the walls of Lisbon, called Santos, that is, Saints, founded by reason of some martyrs that were martyred there. And the religious women of that place have liberty to marry with the knights of their order before they enter into that holy profession.'

The rest of our author's remarks are in too curious a spirit to be omitted. 'In this monastery,' he says, 'the same Donna Ines died, leaving behind her a glorious reputation for her virtue and holiness. Observe, gentle reader, the constancy that this Portuguese, a shoemaker, continued in, loathing to behold the honourable estate of his grandchild, nor would any more acknowledge his daughter, having been a lewd woman, for purchasing advancement with dishonour. This considered, you will not wonder at the Count Julian, that plagued Spain, and executed the king Roderigo for forcing his daughter la Cava. The example of this shoemaker is especially worthy the noting, and deeply to be considered, for, besides that it makes good our assertion, it teaches the higher not to disdain the lower, as long as they be virtuous and lovers of honour. It may be, that this old man for his integrity, rising from a virtuous zeal,

merited that a daughter coming by descent from his grandchild, should be made Queen of Castile, and the mother of great Isabel, grandmother to the Emperor Charles the Fifth, and Ferdinando.'

Alas ! a pretty posterity our shoemaker had, in Philip the Second and his successors, —a race more suitable to his severity against his child, than his blessing upon his grandchild. Old Barbadon was a fine fellow too, after his fashion. We do not know how he reconciled his unforgiving conduct with his Christianity ; but he had enough precedents on that point. What we admire in him is his showing that he acted out of principle, and did not mistake passion for it. His crepidarian sculptures indeed are not so well ; but a little vanity may be allowed to mingle with and soften such edge-tools of self-denial as he chose to handle. His treatment of his daughter was ignorant, and in wiser times would have been brutal ; especially when it was considered how much the conduct of children is modified by education and other circumstances : but then a brutal man would not have accompanied it with such voluntary suffering of his own. Neither did Barbadon leave his daughter to take her chance in the wide

world, thinking of the evils she might be enduring, only to give a greater zest of fancied pity to the contentedness of his cruelty. He knew she was well taken care of; and if she was not to have the enjoyment of his society, he was determined that it should be a very uncomfortable one to himself. He knew that she lay on a princely bed, while he would have none at all. He knew that she was served upon gold and silver, while he renounced his old chestnut table,—the table at which she used to sit. He knew while he sat looking at his old beard and the wilful sordidness of his hands, that her locks and fair limbs were objects of worship to the gallant and the great. And so he set off his destitutions against her over-possession; and took out the punishment he gave her, in revenge upon himself. This was the instinct of a man who loved a principle, but hated nobody:—of a man who in a wiser time would have felt the wisdom of kindness. Thus his blessing upon his grandchild becomes consistent with his cruelty to his child: and his living stock was a fine one in spite of him. His daughter showed a sense of the wound she had given such a father, by relinquishing the sympathies she loved, because they had hurt him: and

her son, worthy of such a grandfather and such a daughter, and refined into a gracefulness of knowledge by education, thought it no mean thing or vulgar to kneel to the gray-headed artisan in the street, and beg the blessing of his honest hand.

THE HAMADRYAD *

[From the *Indicator*, 1820]

AN Assyrian of the name of Rhoecus observing a fine old oak tree ready to fall with age, ordered it to be sustained with props. He was continuing his way through the solitary skirts of the place, when a Nymph of more than human look appeared before him, with gladness in her eyes. 'Rhoecus,' she said, 'I am the Nymph of the tree you have saved from perishing. My life is, of course, implicated in its own. But for you, my existence must have terminated. But for you, the sap would have ceased to flow through its boughs, and the godlike essence I received from it to animate these veins. No more should I have felt the wind in my hair, the sun upon my cheeks, or the balmy rain upon my body.' Now I shall feel them

* See the Scholiast upon Apollonius Rhodius, or the Mythology of Natalis Comes.

many years to come. Many years also will your fellow creatures sit under my shade, and hear the benignity of my whispers, and repay me with their honey and their thanks. Ask what I can give you, Rhoecus, and you shall have it.'

The young man, who had done a graceful action but had not thought of its containing so many kindly things, received the praises of the Nymph with a due mixture of surprise and homage. He did not want courage, however ; and emboldened by her tone and manner, and still more by a beauty which had all the buxom bloom of humanity in it, with a preternatural gracefulness besides, he requested that she would receive him as a lover. There was a look in her face at this request, answering to modesty, but something still finer. Having no guilt, she seemed to have none of the common infirmities either of shame or impudence. In fine, she consented to reward Rhoecus as he wished ; and said she would send a bee to inform him of the hour of their meeting.

Who now was so delighted as Rhoecus ? for he was a great admirer of the fair sex, and not a little proud of their admiring him in return ; and no human beauty whom he had known could compare with the Hama-

dryad. It must be owned at the same time that his taste for love and beauty was not of quite so exalted a description as he took it for. If he was fond of the fair sex, he was pretty nearly as fond of dice, and feasting, and any other excitement which came in his way ; and unluckily he was throwing the dice that very moon when the bee came to summon him.

He was at a very interesting part of the game,—so much so, that he did not at first recognize the object of the bee's humming. 'Confound this bee!' said he, 'it seems plaguily fond of me.' He brushed it away two or three times, but the busy messenger returned, and only hummed the louder. At last he bethought him of the Nymph ; but his impatience seemed to increase with his pride, and he gave the poor insect such a brush as sent him away crippled in both his thighs.

The bee returned to his mistress as well as he could ; and shortly afterwards was followed by his joyous assailant, who came triumphing in the success of his dice and his passion. 'I am here,' said the Hamadryad. Rhoecus looked among the trees, but could see nobody. 'I am here,' said a grave sweet voice, 'right before you.' Rhoecus saw nothing. 'Alas,' said she,

‘Rhoecus, you cannot see me, nor will you see me more. I had thought better of your discernment and your kindness ; but you were but gifted with a momentary sight of me. You will see nothing in future but common things, and those sadly. You are struck blind to everything else. The hand that could strike my bee with a lingering death, and prefer the embracing of the dice-box to that of affectionate beauty, is not worthy of love and the green trees.’

The wind sighed off to a distance ; and Rhoecus felt that he was alone.

THE MOUNTAIN OF THE TWO LOVERS

[From the *Companion*, 1828]

WE forget in what book it was, many years ago, that we read the story of a lover who was to win his mistress by carrying her to the top of a mountain, and how he did win her, and how they ended their days on the same spot.

We think the scene was in Switzerland ; but the mountain, though high enough to tax his stout heart to the uttermost, must have been amongst the lowest. Let us fancy it a good lofty hill in the summer-time. It was, at any rate, so high, that the father of

the lady, a proud noble, thought it impossible for a young man so burdened to scale it. For this reason alone, in scorn, he bade him do it, and his daughter should be his.

The peasantry assembled in the valley to witness so extraordinary a sight. They measured the mountain with their eyes ; they communed with one another, and shook their heads ; but all admired the young man ; and some of his fellows, looking at their mistresses, thought they could do as much. The father was on horseback, apart and sullen, repenting that he had subjected his daughter even to the show of such a hazard ; but he thought it would teach his inferiors a lesson. The young man (the son of a small land-proprietor, who had some pretensions to wealth, though none to nobility) stood, respectful-looking but confident, rejoicing in his heart that he should win his mistress, though at the cost of a noble pain, which he could hardly think of as a pain, considering who it was that he was to carry. If he died for it, he should at least have had her in his arms, and have looked her in the face. To clasp her person in that manner was a pleasure which he contemplated with such transport, as is known only to real lovers ; for none others know

how respect heightens the joy of dispensing with formality, and how the dispensing with the formality ennobles and makes grateful the respect.

The lady stood by the side of her father, pale, desirous, and dreading. She thought her lover would succeed, but only because she thought him in every respect the noblest of his sex, and that nothing was too much for his strength and valour. Great fears came over her nevertheless. She knew not what might happen in the chances common to all. She felt the bitterness of being herself the burden to him and the task ; and dared neither to look at her father nor the mountain. She fixed her eyes now on the crowd (which nevertheless she beheld not) and now on her hand and her fingers' ends, which she doubled up before her with a pretty pretence,—the only deception she had ever used. Once or twice a daughter or a mother slipped out of the crowd, and coming up to her, notwithstanding their fears of the lord baron, kissed that hand which she knew not what to do with.

The father said, ' Now, Sir, to put an end to this mummary ' ; and the lover, turning pale for the first time, took up the lady.

The spectators rejoice to see the manner

in which he moves off, slow but secure, and as if encouraging his mistress. They mount the hill ; they proceed well ; he halts an instant before he gets midway, and seems refusing something ; then ascends at a quicker rate ; and now being at the midway point, shifts the lady from one side to the other. The spectators give a great shout. The baron, with an air of indifference, bites the tip of his gauntlet, and then casts on them an eye of rebuke. At the shout the lover resumes his way. Slow but not feeble in his step, yet it gets slower. He stops again, and they think they see the lady kiss him on the forehead. The women begin to tremble, but the men say he will be victorious. He resumes again ; he is halfway between the middle and the top ; he rushes, he stops, he staggers ; but he does not fall. Another shout from the men, and he resumes once more ; two-thirds of the remaining part of the way are conquered. They are certain the lady kisses him on the forehead and on the eyes. The women burst into tears, and the stoutest men look pale. He ascends slower than ever, but seeming to be more sure. He halts, but it is only to plant his foot to go on again ; and thus he picks his way, planting his foot

at every step, and then gaining ground with an effort. The lady lifts up her arms, as if to lighten him. See : he is almost at the top ; he stops, he struggles, he moves sideways, taking very little steps, and bringing one foot every time close to the other. Now—he is all but on the top : he halts again ; he is fixed ; he staggers. A groan goes through the multitude. Suddenly, he turns full front towards the top ; it is luckily almost a level ; he staggers, but it is forward : Yes :—every limb in the multitude makes a movement as if it would assist him : see at last : he is *on* the top ; and down he falls flat with his burden. An enormous shout ! He has won : he has won. Now he has a right to caress his mistress, and she is caressing him, for neither of them gets up. If he has fainted, it is with joy, and it is in her arms.

The baron puts spurs to his horse, the crowd following him. Half way he is obliged to dismount ; they ascend the rest of the hill together, the crowd silent and happy, the baron ready to burst with shame and impatience. They reach the top. The lovers are face to face on the ground, the lady clasping him with both arms, his lying on each side.

‘Traitor !’ exclaimed the baron, ‘thou

hast practised this feat before on purpose to deceive me. Arise !' 'You cannot expect it, Sir,' said a worthy man who was rich enough to speak his mind : 'Samson himself might take his rest after such a deed.'

'Part them !' said the baron.

Several persons went up, not to part them, but to congratulate and keep them together. These people look close ; they kneel down ; they bend an ear ; they bury their faces upon them. 'God forbid they should ever be parted more,' said a venerable man ; 'they never can be.' He turned his face streaming with tears, and looked up at the baron — 'Sir, they are dead.'

CRITICISM

[It may well be that that portion of Leigh Hunt's work is the most valuable which is the least prominent. So fine and delicate a talent as his was just the medium necessary to appreciate the rarefied poetry of Shelley and Keats. It is largely due to Hunt we owe the fact that these poets triumphed in their works as soon as they did. When all England was rendering to Byron, Moore, and Campbell a homage, that, to say the least of it, was beyond their deserts; when *Lalla Rookh* was selling for £3000, and Coleridge was neglected, Hunt in his quiet, but forcible way was doing his best to straighten out one of the maddest tangles and confusions into which English criticism and poetry had ever adventured.

Imagination and Fancy, from which most of the following extracts are taken, is a book of criticism on the English poets and dramatists. Leigh Hunt writes here with enthusiasm. He quotes at great length. He italicises persistently, and is for ever plucking your sleeve to show you some fresh wonder, some rare image, some delicate turn or fancy. It is just the kind of thing which one poet might exchange with another.

The chapters of *Imagination and Fancy* are, each of them, concerned with some particular poet, and contain, as a rule, very lengthy extracts from the author under review. Once or twice, in the following selections, a quoted passage has been omitted, but, generally, the excerpts given have been made from such portions of the work as are didactic rather than illustrative.]

SPENSER

[From *Imagination and Fancy*]

THREE things must be conceded to the objectors against this divine poet : first, that he wrote a good deal of allegory ; second, that he has a great many superfluous words ; third, that he was very fond of alliteration. He is accused also (by little boys) of obsolete words and spelling ; and it must be added that he often forces his rhymes ; nay, spells them in an arbitrary manner on purpose to make them fit. In short, he has a variety of faults, real or supposed, that would be intolerable in writers in general. This is true. The answer is, that his genius not only makes amends for all, but overlays them, and makes them beautiful, with ‘riches fineless.’ When acquaintance with him is once begun, he repels none but the anti-poetical. Others may not be able to

read him continuously ; but more or less, and as an enchanted stream 'to dip into,' they will read him always.

In Spenser's time, orthography was unsettled. Pronunciation is always so. The great poet, therefore, sometimes spells his words, whether rhymed or otherwise, in a manner apparently arbitrary, for the purpose of inducing the reader to give them the sound fittest for the sense. Alliteration, which, as a ground of melody, had been a principle in Anglo-Saxon verse, continued such a favourite with old English poets whom Spenser loved, that, as late as the reign of Edward the Third, it stood in the place of rhyme itself. Our author turns it to beautiful account. Superfluosness, though eschewed with a fine instinct by Chaucer in some of his latest works, where the narrative was fullest of action and character, abounded in his others ; and, in spite of the classics, it had not been recognised as a fault in Spenser's time, when books were still rare, and a writer thought himself bound to pour out all he felt and knew. It accorded also with his genius ; and in him is not an excess of weakness, but of will and luxury. And as to allegory, it was not only the taste of the day, originat-

ing in gorgeous pageants of church and state, but in Spenser's hands it became such an embodiment of poetry itself, that its objectors really deserve no better answer than has been given them by Mr Hazlitt, who asks, if they thought the allegory would 'bite them.' The passage will be found a little further on.

Spenser's great characteristic is poetic luxury. If you go to him for a story, you will be disappointed ; if for a style, classical or concise, the point against him is conceded ; if for pathos, you must weep for personages half-real and too beautiful ; if for mirth, you must laugh out of good breeding, and because it pleaseth the great, sequestered man, to be facetious. But if you love poetry well enough to enjoy it for its own sake, let no evil reports of his 'allegory' deter you from his acquaintance, for great will be your loss. His allegory itself is but one part allegory, and nine parts beauty and enjoyment ; sometimes an excess of flesh and blood. His forced rhymes, and his sentences written to fill up, which in a less poet would be intolerable, are accompanied with such endless grace and dreaming pleasure fit to

Make heaven drowsy with the harmony,

that although it is to be no more expected of anybody to read him through at once, than to wander days and nights in a forest, thinking of nothing else, yet any true lover of poetry, when he comes to know him, would as soon quarrel with repose on the summer grass. You may get up and go away, but will return next day at noon to listen to his waterfalls, and to see, 'with half-shut eye,' his visions of knights and nymphs, his gods and goddesses, whom he brought down again to earth in immortal beauty.

Spenser, in some respects, is more southern than the south itself. Dante, but for the covered heat which occasionally concentrates the utmost sweetness as well as venom, would be quite northern compared with him. He is more luxurious than Ariosto or Tasso, more haunted with the presence of beauty. His wholesale poetical belief, mixing up all creeds and mythologies, but with less violence, resembles that of Dante and Boccaccio; and it gives the compound the better warrant in the more agreeable impression. Then his versification is almost perpetual honey.

Spenser is the farthest removed from the ordinary cares and haunts of the world of all the poets that ever wrote, except perhaps

Ovid ; and this, which is the reason why mere men of business and the world do not like him, constitutes his most bewitching charm with the poetical. He is not so great a poet as Shakespeare or Dante ;—he has less imagination, though more fancy, than Milton. He does not see things so purely in their elements as Dante ; neither can he combine their elements like Shakespeare, nor bring such frequent intensities of words, or of wholesale imaginative sympathy, to bear upon his subject as any one of them ; though he has given noble diffuser instances of the latter in his *Una*, and his *Mammon*, and his accounts of *Jealousy* and *Despair*.

But when you are ‘over-informed’ with thought and passion in Shakespeare, when Milton’s mighty grandeurs oppress you, or are found mixed with painful absurdities, or when the world is vexatious and tiresome, and you have had enough of your own vanities or struggles in it, or when ‘house and land’ themselves are ‘gone and spent,’ and your riches must lie in the regions of the ‘unknown,’ then Spenser is ‘most excellent.’ His remoteness from everyday life is the reason perhaps why Somers and Chatham admired him ; and his possession of every kind of imaginary wealth completes his charm with

his brother poets. Take him in short for what he is, whether greater or less than his fellows, the poetical faculty is so abundantly and beautifully predominant in him above every other, though he had passion, and thought, and plenty of ethics, and was as learned a man as Ben Jonson, perhaps as Milton himself, that he has always been felt by his countrymen to be what Charles Lamb called him, the 'Poet's Poet.' He has had more idolatry and imitation from his brethren than all the rest put together. The old undramatic poets, Drayton, Browne, Drummond, Giles and Phineas Fletcher, were as full of him as the dramatic were of Shakespeare. Milton studied and used him, calling him the 'sage and serious Spenser'; and adding, that he 'dared be known to think him a better teacher than Scotus or Aquinas.' Cowley said that he became a poet by reading him. Dryden claimed him for a master. Pope said he read him with as much pleasure when he was old as young. Collins and Gray loved him; Thomson, Shenstone, and a host of inferior writers, expressly imitated him; Burns, Byron, Shelley, and Keats made use of his stanza; Coleridge eulogized him; and he is as dear to the best living poets as he was

to their predecessors. Spenser has stood all the changes in critical opinion; all the logical and formal conclusions of the understanding, as opposed to imagination and lasting sympathy. Hobbes in vain attempted to depose him in favour of Davenant's *Gondibert*. Locke and his friend Molyneux to no purpose preferred Blackmore! Hume, acute and encroaching philosopher as he was, but not so universal in his philosophy as great poets, hurt Spenser's reputation with none but the French (who did not know him); and, by way of involuntary amends for the endeavour, he set up for poets such men as Wilkie and Blacklock! In vain, in vain. 'In spite of philosophy and fashion,' says a better critic of that day (Bishop Hurd), 'Faerie Spenser' still ranks highest amongst the poets; I mean with all those who are either of that house, or have any kindness for it. Earth-born critics may blaspheme—

But all the *gods* are ravish'd with delight

Of his celestial song and musick's wondrous might.

Remarks on the Plan and Conduct of the Faerie Queene (in Codd's edition of Spenser, vol. ii. p. 183).

'In reading Spenser,' says Warton, 'if the critic is not satisfied, yet the reader is transported.'—(*Id.* p. 65.)

‘Spenser,’ observes Coleridge, ‘has the wit of the southern, with the deeper inwardness of the northern genius. Take especial note of the marvellous independence and true imaginative absence of all particular space or time in the *Faerie Queen*. It is in the domains neither of history nor geography : it is ignorant of all artificial boundary, all material obstacles ; it is truly in land of Faerie, that is, of mental space. The poet has placed you in a dream, a charmed sleep : and you neither wish nor have the power to enquire, where you are, or how you got there.’—*Literary Remains*, vol. i. p. 94.

‘In reading the *Faerie Queene*,’ says Hazlitt, ‘you see a little withered old man by a wood-side opening a wicket, a giant and a dwarf lagging far behind, a damsel in a boat upon an enchanted lake, wood-nymphs and satyrs ; and all of a sudden you are transported into a lofty palace, with tapers burning, amidst knights and ladies, with dance and revelry, and song, “and mask and antique pageantry.”—But some people will say that all this may be very fine, but they cannot understand it on account of the allegory. They are afraid of the allegory, as if they thought it would bite them ; they

look at it as a child looks at a painted dragon, and think that it will strangle them in its shining folds. This is very idle. If they do not meddle with the allegory, the allegory will not meddle with them. Without minding it at all, the whole is as plain as a pike-staff. It might as well be pretended, that we cannot see Poussin's pictures for the allegory, as that the allegory prevents us from understanding Spenser.'

MARLOWE

[From *Imagination and Fancy*]

IF ever there was a born poet, Marlowe was one. He perceived things in their spiritual as well as material relations, and impressed them with a corresponding felicity. Rather, he struck them as with something sweet and glowing that rushes by ;—perfumes from a censer,—glances of love and beauty. And he could accumulate images into as deliberate and lofty grandeur. Chapman said of him, that he stood

Up to the chin in the Pierian flood.

Drayton describes him as if inspired by the recollection :—

Next Marlowe, bathèd in the Thespian springs,
Had in him *those brave translunary things,*
That the first poets had ; his raptures were
All air and fire, which made his verses clear :
For that fine madness still he did retain,
Which rightly should possess a poet's brain.

But this happy genius appears to have had as unhappy a will, which obscured his judgment. It made him condescend to write fustian for the town in order to rule over it ; subjected him to the charge of impiety, probably for nothing but too scornfully treating irreverent notions of the Deity ; and brought him, in the prime of his life, to a violent end in a tavern. His plays abound in wilful and self-worshipping speeches, and every one of them turns upon some kind of ascendancy at the expense of other people. He was the head of a set of young men from the university, the Peeles, Greens, and others, all more or less possessed of a true poetical vein, who, bringing scholarship to the theatre, were intoxicated with the new graces they threw on the old bombast, carried to their height the vices as well as wit of the town, and were destined to see, with indignation and astonishment, their work taken out of their hands, and done better, by the uneducated interloper from Stratford-upon-Avon.

Marlowe enjoys the singular and (so far) unaccountable honour of being the only English writer to whom Shakespeare seems to have alluded with approbation. In *As You Like It*, Phœbe says,

Dead Shepherd ! now I know thy saw of might,—
‘Who ever lov’d that lov’d not at first sight?’

The ‘saw’ is in Marlowe’s *Hero and Leander*, a poem not comparable with his plays.

The ranting part of Marlowe’s reputation has been chiefly owing to the tragedy of *Tamburlaine*, a passage in which is laughed at in *Henry the Fourth*, and has become famous. Tamburlaine cries out to the captive monarchs whom he has yoked to his car—

Holla, ye pampered jades of Asia,
What ! can ye draw but twenty miles a day,
And have so proud a chariot at your heels,
And such a coachman as great Tamburlaine ?

Then follows a picture drawn with real poetry :—

The horse that *guide the golden eye of Heaven*,
And blow the morning from their nostrils (read *nosterils*),
Making their fiery gait above the clouds,
Are not so honour’d in their governor,
As you, ye slaves, in mighty Tamburlaine.

It has latterly been thought that a genius

like Marlowe could have had no hand in a play so bombastic as this huffing tragedy. But besides the weighty and dignified, though monotonous tone of his versification in many places (what Ben Jonson, very exactly as well as finely, calls 'Marlowe's mighty *line*'), there are passages in it of force and feeling, of which I doubt whether any of his contemporaries were capable in so sustained a degree, though Greene and Peele had felicitous single lines, and occasionally a refined sweetness. Take, for instance, the noble verses to be found in the description of Tamburlaine himself, which probably suggested to Milton his 'Atlantean shoulders'—'fit to bear mightiest monarchies'—and to Beaumont a fine image, which the reader will see in his *Melancholy* :—

Of stature tall and straightly fashionèd,
Like his desire lift upward and divine,
So large of limbs, his joints so strongly knit,
Such breadth of shoulders as might mainly bear
Old Atlas' burthen :—
Pale of complexion, wrought in him with passion, etc.

By 'passion' we are to understand, not anger, but deep emotions. Peele or Greene might possibly have written the beautiful verse that closes these four lines—

Kings of Argier, Morocco, and of Fesse,
 You that have marched with happy Tamburlaine
 As far as from the frozen place of heaven
Unto the watery morning's ruddy bower :—

but the following is surely Marlowe's own :—

*As princely lions when they rouse themselves,
 Stretching their paws and threatening herds of beasts,
 So in his armour looketh Tamburlaine :*

and in the following is not only a hint of the scornful part of his style, such as commences the extract from the *Jew of Malta*, but the germ of those lofty and harmonious nomenclatures, which have been thought peculiar to Milton :—

So from the east unto the farthest west
 Shall Tamburlaine extend his puissant arm.
 The gallies and *those pilling brigandines*
 That yearly sail to the Venetian gulf,
 And hover in the Straits for Christian wreck,
Shall lie at anchor in the isle of Arant,
Until the Persian fleet and men of wars,
Sailing along the Oriental sea,
Have fetch'd about the Indian continent,
Even from Persepolis to Mexico,
And thence unto the Straits of Jubaltàr.

Milton never surpassed the elevation of that close. Who also but Marlowe is likely to have written the fine passage extracted into this volume, under the title of *Beauty beyond*

Expression, in which the thought argues as much expression as the style a confident dignity? *Tamburlaine* was most likely a stock-joint piece, got up from the manager's chest by Marlowe, Nash, and perhaps half-a-dozen others ; for there are two consecutive plays on the subject, and the theatres of our own time are not unacquainted with this species of manufacture.

But I am forgetting the plan of my book. Marlowe, like Spenser, is to be looked upon as a poet who had no native precursors. As Spenser is to be criticised with an eye to his poetic ancestors, who had nothing like the *Faerie Queene*, so is Marlowe with reference to the authors of *Gorboduc*. He got nothing from them ; he prepared the way for the versification, the dignity, and the pathos of his successors, who have nothing finer of the kind to show than the death of Edward the Second—not Shakespeare himself :—and his imagination, like Spenser's, haunted those purely poetic regions of ancient fabling and modern rapture, of beautiful forms and passionate expressions, which they were the first to render the common property of inspiration, and whence their language drew 'emptyreal air.' Marlowe and Spenser are the first of our poets who perceived the beauty of words ;

not as apart from their significance, nor upon occasion only, as Chaucer did (more marvellous in that than themselves, or than the originals from whom he drew), but as a habit of the poetic mood, and as receiving and reflecting beauty through the feeling of the ideas.

COLERIDGE

[From *Imagination and Fancy*]

COLERIDGE lived in the most extraordinary and agitated period of modern history ; and to a certain extent he was so mixed up with its controversies, that he was at one time taken for nothing but an apostate republican, and at another for a dreaming theosophist. The truth is, that both his politics and theosophy were at the mercy of a discursive genius, intellectually bold but educationally timid, which, anxious, or rather willing, to bring conviction and speculation together, mooting all points as it went, and throwing the subtlest glancing lights on many, ended in satisfying nobody, and concluding nothing. Charles Lamb said of him, that he had ‘the art of making the unintelligible appear intelligible.’ He was the finest dreamer, the most eloquent talker, and the most original thinker of his day ; but for want of com-

plexional energy, did nothing with all the vast *prose* part of his mind but help the Germans to give a subtler tone to criticism, and sow a few valuable seeds of thought in minds worthy to receive them. Nine-tenths of his theology would apply equally well to their own creeds in the mouths of a Brahmin or a Mussulman.

His poetry is another matter. It is so beautiful, and was so quietly content with its beauty, making no call on the critics, and receiving hardly any notice, that people are but now beginning to awake to a full sense of its merits. Of pure poetry, strictly so called, that is to say, consisting of nothing but its essential self, without conventional and perishing helps, he was the greatest master of his time. If you could see it in a phial, like a distillation of roses (taking it, I mean, at its best), it would be found without a speck. The poet is happy with so good a gift, and the reader is 'happy in his happiness.' Yet so little, sometimes, are a man's contemporaries and personal acquaintances able or disposed to estimate him properly, that while Coleridge, unlike Shakespeare, lavished praises on his poetic friends, he had all the merit of the generosity to himself; and even Hazlitt, owing perhaps to causes of political alienation,

could see nothing to admire in the exquisite poem of *Christabel*, but the description of the quarrel between the friends ! After speaking, too, of the *Ancient Mariner* as the only one of his poems that he could point out to any one as giving an adequate idea of his great natural powers, he adds, 'It is High German, however, and in it he seems to conceive of poetry but as a drunken dream, reckless, careless, and heedless of past, present, and to come.' This is said of a poem, with which fault has been found for the exceeding conscientiousness of its moral ! O ye critics, the best of ye, what havoc does personal difference play with your judgments ! It was not Mr Hazlitt's only or most unwarrantable censure, or one which friendship found hardest to forgive. But peace, and honour too, be with his memory ! If he was a splenetic and sometimes jealous man, he was a disinterested politician and an admirable critic : and lucky were those whose natures gave them the right and the power to pardon him.

Coleridge, though born a poet, was in his style and general musical feeling the disciple partly of Spenser, and partly of the fine old English ballad-writers in the collection of Bishop Percy. But if he could not improve

on them in some things, how he did in others, especially in the art of being thoroughly musical ! Of all our writers of the briefer narrative poetry, Coleridge is the finest since Chaucer ; and assuredly he is the sweetest of all our poets. Waller's music is but a court-flourish in comparison ; and though Beaumont and Fletcher, Collins, Gray, Keats, Shelley, and others have several as sweet passages, and Spenser is in a certain sense musical throughout, yet no man has written whole poems, of equal length, so perfect in the sentiment of music, so varied with it, and yet leaving on the ear so unbroken and single an effect.

*A damsel with a dulcimer
In a vision once I saw ;
It was an Abyssinian maid,
And on her dulcimer she play'd,
Singing of Mount Abora.*

That is but one note of a music ever sweet,
yet never cloying.

*It ceas'd ; yet still the sails made on
A pleasant noise till noon,
A noise like of a hidden brook
In the leafy month of June,
That to the sleeping woods all night
Singeth a quiet tune.*

The stanzas of the poem from which this

extract is made (*The Ancient Mariner*) generally consisted of four lines only ; but see how the 'brook' has carried him on with it through the silence of the night.

I have said a good deal of the versification of *Christabel*, in the Essay prefixed to this volume, but I cannot help giving a further quotation.

It was a lovely sight to see
 The lady Christabel, when she
 Was praying at the old oak tree.
Amid the jagged shadows
Of mossy leafless boughs,
Kneeling in the moonlight
To make her gentle vows ;
 Her slender palms together press'd
Heaving sometimes on her breast
Her face resigned to bliss or bale—
Her face, O call it fair not pale !
 And both blue eyes more bright than clear,
Each about to have a tear.

All the weeping eyes of Guido were nothing to that. But I shall be quoting the whole poem. I wish I could ; but I fear to trespass upon the booksellers' property. One more passage, however, I cannot resist. The good Christabel has been undergoing a trance in the arms of the wicked witch Geraldine ;—

A star hath set, a star hath risen,
O Geraldine ! since arms of thine
Have been the lovely lady's prison.
O Geraldine ! one hour was thine—
Thou hast thy will ! *By tarn and rill*
The night-birds all that hour were still,

(An appalling fancy)

But now they are *jubilant* anew,
From cliff and tower tu-whoo ! tu-whoo !
Tu-whoo ! tu-whoo ! from wood and fell.

And see ! the lady Christabel

(This, observe, begins a new paragraph,
with a break in the rhyme)

Gathers herself from out her trance ;
Her limbs relax, her countenance
Grows sad and soft ; the smooth thin lids
Close o'er her eyes ; and tears she sheds—
Large tears that leave the lashes bright !
And oft the while she seems to smile,
As infants at a sudden light.

Yea, she doth smile, and she doth weep,
Like a youthful hermitess
Beauteous in a wilderness,
Who praying always, prays in sleep.
And, if she move unquietly,
Perchance 'tis but the blood so free
Comes back and tingles in her feet
No doubt she hath a vision sweet :
What if her guardian spirit 'twere ?

What if she knew her mother near ?
 But this she knows, in joys and woes,
 That saints will aid, if men will call,
For the blue sky bends over all.

We see how such a poet obtains his music. Such forms of melody can proceed only from the most beautiful inner spirit of sympathy and imagination. He sympathizes, in his universality, with antipathy itself. If Regan or Goneril had been a young and handsome witch of the times of chivalry, and attuned her violence to craft, or betrayed it in venomous looks, she could not have beaten the soft-voiced, appalling spells, or sudden, snake-eyed glances of the Lady Geraldine,—looks which the innocent Christabel, in her fascination, feels compelled to ‘imitate.’

A snake’s small eye blinks dull and shy,
 And the lady’s eyes they shrunk in her head,
 Each shrunk up to a serpent’s eye ;
 And with somewhat of malice and more of dread,
 At Christabel she look’d askance.

* * * * *

The maid devoid of guile and sin,
 I know not how, in fearful wise,
 So deeply had she drunken in
 That look, those *shrunkēn serpent eyes*,
 That all her features were resign’d
 To this sole image in her mind,
And passively did imitate
That look of dull and treacherous hate.

This is as exquisite in its knowledge of the fascinating tendencies of fear as it is in its description. And what can surpass a line quoted already in the Essay (but I must quote it again !) for very perfection of grace and sentiment ?—the line in the passage where Christabel is going to bed, before she is aware that her visitor is a witch.

Quoth Christabel,—So let it be !
And as the lady bade, did she.
Her gentle limbs did she undress,
And lay down in her loveliness.

Oh ! it is too late now ; and habit and self-love blinded me at the time, and I did not know (much as I admired him) how great a poet lived in that grove at Highgate ; or I would have cultivated its walks more, as I might have done, and endeavoured to return him, with my gratitude, a small portion of the delight his verses have given me.

I must add, that I do not think Coleridge's earlier poems at all equal to the rest. Many, indeed, I do not care to read a second time ; but there are some ten or a dozen, of which I never tire, and which will one day make a small and precious volume to put in the pockets of all enthusiasts in poetry, and endure with the language. Five of these

are *The Ancient Mariner*, *Christabel*, *Kubla Khan*, *Genevieve*, and *Youth and Age*. Some, that more personally relate to the poet, will be added for the love of him, not omitting the *Visit of the Gods*, from Schiller, and the famous passage on the Heathen Mythology, also from Schiller. A short life, a portrait, and some other engravings perhaps, will complete the book, after the good old fashion of Cooke's and Bell's editions of the Poets; and then, like the contents of the Jew of Malta's casket, there will be

Infinite riches in a little room.

SHELLEY

[From Hunt's preface to the *Mask of Anarchy*. Shelley wrote his *Mask of Anarchy* in 1819, on the occasion of the political massacre in Manchester. Hunt was editing the *Examiner* at the time, and to him as an ardent reformer and an enthusiastic fighter for liberty and progress, Shelley sent his manuscript. 'I did not,' writes Leigh Hunt, 'insert it, because I thought that the public at large had not become sufficiently discerning to do justice to the sincerity and kind-heartedness of the spirit that walked in this flaming robe of verse.' It eventually appeared in 1832, in volume form, with the preface from which the following extracts are taken.]

THE Poem, though written purposely in a lax and familiar measure, is highly

characteristical of the author. It has the usual ardour of his tone, the unbounded sensibility by which he combines the most domestic with the most remote and fanciful images, and the patience, so beautifully checking, and, in fact, produced by the extreme impatience of his moral feeling. His patience is the deposit of many impatiences, acting upon an equal measure of understanding and moral taste. His wisdom is the wisdom of a heart overcharged with sensibility, acquiring the profoundest notions of justice from the completest sympathy, and at once taking refuge from its pain, and working out its extremest purposes, in the adoption of a stubborn and loving fortitude which neutralises resistance. His very strokes of humour, while they startle with their extravagance, and even ghastliness, cut to the heart with pathos. The fourth and fifth stanzas, for instance, of this poem involve an allusion which becomes affecting from our knowing what he must have felt when he wrote it. It is to his children who were taken from him by the late Lord Chancellor, under that preposterous law by which every succeeding age might be made to blush for the tortures inflicted on the opinions of its predecessor, 'Anarchy,

the Skeleton ' riding through the streets,
and grinning and bowing on each side of him,

As well as if his education
Had cost ten millions to the nation,

is another instance of the union of ludicrousness with terror. Hope, lurking ' more like despair,' and laying herself down before his horses' feet to die, is a touching image. The description of the rise and growth of the Public Enlightenment,

——upborne on wings whose grain
Was as the light of sunny rain,

and producing ' thoughts ' as he went,

As stars from night's loose hair are shaken,

till, on a sudden, the prostrate multitude
look up,

——And ankle-deep in blood,
Hope that maiden most serene,
Was walking with a quiet mien,

is rich with the author's usual treasure of imagery and splendid words. The sixty-third is a delicious stanza, producing a most happy and comforting picture in the midst of visions of blood and tumult. We see the light from its cottage window. The substantial blessings of freedom are nobly described ; and lastly, the advice given by

the poet, the great national measure recommended by him, is singularly striking as a *political anticipation*.

Mr Shelley's countrymen know how anxious he was for the advancement of the common good, but they have yet to become acquainted with his anxiety in behalf of this particular means of it—Reform. The first time I heard from him was upon the subject : it was before I knew him, and while he was a student at Oxford, in the year 1811.

So early did he begin his career of philanthropy ! Mankind and their interests were scarcely ever out of his thoughts. It was a moot point when he entered your room, whether he would begin with some half-pleasant, half-pensive joke, or quote something frank, or ask some question about public affairs. I remember his coming upon me when I had not seen him for a long time ; and after grappling my hands with both his, in his usual fervent way, sitting down and looking at me very earnestly with a deep though not melancholy interest in his face. We were sitting in a cottage study with our knees to the fire, to which we had been getting nearer and nearer in the comfort of finding ourselves together ; the pleasure of

seeing him was my only feeling at the moment ; and the air of domesticity about us was so complete, that I thought he was going to speak of some family matter—either his or my own ; when he asked me at the close of an intensity of pause, what was ‘the amount of the National Debt.’

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It has been hastily implied in a late notice of him, in a periodical work, that he was an aristocrat by disposition as well as by birth ; a conclusion natural enough, even with intelligent men who have been bred among aristocratical influences ; but it is a pity that any such persons should give it as their opinion, because it tends to confirm inferior understandings in a similar delusion and to make the vulgarity of would-be refinement still more confident in its assumptions. It is acknowledged on all hands, that Mr Shelley’s mind was not one to be measured by common rules—not even by such as the vulgar, great or small, take for uncommon ones, or for cunning pieces of corporate knowledge snugly kept between one another. If there is anything I can affirm of my beloved friend, with as much confidence as the fact of his being benevolent *and* a friend, it is that he was totally free from mistakes

of this kind ; that he never for one moment confounded the claims of real and essential, with those of conventional refinement ; or allowed one to be substituted for the other in his mind by any compromise of his self-love.

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That quintessence of gentlemanly demeanour which was observable in Mr Shelley, in drawing-rooms, when he was not overthoughtful, was nothing but an exquisite combination of sense, moral grace, and habitual sympathy. It was more dignified than what is called dignity in others, because it was the heart of the thing itself, or intrinsic worth, graced by the sincerest idealism ; and not a response made by imputed merit to the homage of the imputers. The best conventional dignity could have no more come up to it, than the trick of an occasion to the truth of a life.

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If ever there was a man upon earth, of a more spiritual nature than ordinary, partaking of the errors and perturbations of his species, but seeing and working through them with a seraphical purpose of good, such an one was Percy Bysshe Shelley.

Among the many reasons which his friends had to deplore the premature death of this

splendid poet and noble-hearted man, the greatest was his not being able to repeat, to a more attentive public, his own protest, not only against some of his earlier effusions (which he did in the newspapers), but against all which he had written in a wailing, and angry, instead of an invariably calm, loving, and therefore thoroughly helping spirit. His works, in justice to himself, require either to be winnowed from what he disliked, or to be read with the remembrance of that dislike. He had a sensibility almost unique, seemingly fitter for a planet of a different sort, or in more final condition, than ours : he has said of himself,—so delicate was his organisation,—that he could

hardly bear

The weight of the superincumbent hour ;

and the impatience which he vented for some years against that rough working towards good, called evil, and which he carried out into conduct too hasty, subjected one of the most naturally pious of men to charges which hurt his name, and thwarted his philanthropy. Had he lived, he would have done away with all mistake on these points, and made everybody know him for what he was,—a man idolised by his friends,—

studious, temperate; of the gentlest life and conversation, and willing to have died to do the world a service. For my part, I never can mention his name without a transport of love and gratitude. I rejoice to have partaken of his cares, and to be both suffering and benefiting from him at this moment; and whenever I think of a future state, and of the great and good Spirit that must pervade it, one of the first faces I humbly hope to see there, is that of the kind and impassioned man, whose intercourse conferred on me the title of the Friend of Shelley.

The finest poetry of Shelley is so mixed up with moral and political speculation, that I found it impossible to give more than the following extracts, in accordance with the purely poetical design of the present volume. Of the poetry of reflection and tragic pathos, he has abundance; but even such fanciful productions as the *Sensitive Plant* and the *Witch of Atlas* are full of metaphysics, and would require a commentary of explanation. The short pieces and passages, however, before us, are so beautiful, that they may well stand as the representatives of the whole powers of his mind in the region of pure poetry. In sweetness (and not even there in passages) the *Ode to the*

Skylark is inferior only to Coleridge,—in rapturous passion to no man. It is like the bird it sings,—enthusiastic, enchanting, profuse, continuous, and alone,—small, but filling the heavens. One of the triumphs of poetry is to associate its remembrance with the beauties of nature. There are probably no lovers of Homer and Shakespeare, who, when looking at the moon, do not often call to mind the descriptions in the eighth book of the *Iliad* and the fifth act of the *Merchant of Venice*. The nightingale (in England) may be said to have belonged exclusively to Milton, till a dying young poet of our own day partook of the honour by the production of his exquisite Ode: and notwithstanding Shakespeare's lark singing 'at heaven's gate,' the longer effusion of Shelley will be identified with thoughts of the bird hereafter, in the minds of all who are susceptible of its beauty. What a pity he did not live to produce a hundred such! or to mingle briefer lyrics, as beautiful as Shakespeare's, with tragedies which Shakespeare himself might have welcomed! for assuredly, had he lived, he would have been the greatest dramatic writer since the days of Elizabeth, if indeed he has not abundantly proved himself such in his tragedy of the

Cenci. Unfortunately, in his indignation against every conceivable form of oppression, he took a subject for that play too much resembling one which Shakespeare had taken in his youth, and still more unsuitable to the stage; otherwise, besides grandeur and terror, there are things in it lovely as heart can worship; and the author showed himself able to draw both men and women, whose names would have become 'familiar in our mouths as household words.' The utmost might of gentleness, and of the sweet habitudes of domestic affection, was never more balmily impressed through the tears of the reader, than in the unique and divine close of that dreadful tragedy. Its loveliness, being that of the highest reason, is superior to the madness of all the crime that has preceded it, and leaves nature in a state of reconcilment with her ordinary course. The daughter, who is going forth with her mother to execution, utters these final words :—

Give yourself *no unnecessary pain*
My dear Lord Cardinal. Here, mother, tie
My girdle for me, and bind up this hair
In any simple knot. Ay, that does well;
And yours, I see, is coming down. How often
Have we done this for one another! now
We shall not do it any more. My Lord,
We are quite ready. *Well,—'tis very well.*

The force of simplicity and moral sweetness cannot go further than this. But in general, if Coleridge is the sweetest of our poets, Shelley is at once the most ethereal and most gorgeous ; the one who has clothed his thoughts in draperies of the most evanescent and most magnificent words and imagery. Not Milton himself is more learned in Grecisms, or nicer in etymological propriety ; and nobody, throughout, has a style so Orphic and primæval. His poetry is as full of mountains, seas, and skies, of light, and darkness, and the seasons, and all the elements of our being, as if Nature herself had written it, with the creation and its hopes newly cast around her ; not, it must be confessed, without too indiscriminate a mixture of great and small, and a want of sufficient shade,—a certain chaotic brilliancy, ‘dark with excess of light.’ Shelley (in the verses to a Lady with a Guitar) might well call himself Ariel. All the more enjoying part of his poetry is Ariel,—the ‘delicate’ yet powerful ‘spirit’ jealous of restraint, yet able to serve ; living in the elements and the flowers ; treading the ‘ooze of the salt deep,’ and running ‘on the sharp wind of the north’ ; feeling for creatures unlike himself ; ‘flaming amazement’ on them too,

and singing exquisitest songs. Alas ! and he suffered for years, as Ariel did in the cloven pine : but now he is out of it, and serving the purposes of Beneficence with a calmness befitting his knowledge and his love.

KEATS

[From *Imagination and Fancy*]

KEATS was born a poet of the most poetical kind. All his feelings came to him through a poetical medium, or were speedily coloured by it. He enjoyed a jest as heartily as any one, and sympathised with the lowliest common-place ; but the next minute his thoughts were in a garden of enchantment, with nymphs, and fauns, and shapes of exalted humanity ;

Elysian beauty, melancholy grace.

It might be said of him, that he never beheld an oak-tree without seeing the Dryad. His fame may now forgive the critics who disliked his politics, and did not understand his poetry. Repeated editions of him in England, France, and America, attest its triumphant survival of all obloquy ; and there can be no doubt that he has taken a permanent station among the British Poets, of a very high, if not thoroughly mature, description.

Keats' early poetry, indeed, partook plentifully of the exuberance of youth ; and even in most of his later, his sensibility, sharpened by mortal illness, tended to a morbid excess. His region is 'a wilderness of sweets,'—flowers of all hue, and 'weeds of glorious feature,'—where, as he says, the luxuriant soil brings

The pipy hemlock to strange overgrowth.

But there also is the 'rain-scented eglantine,' and bushes of May-flowers, with bees, and myrtle, and bay,—and endless paths into forests haunted with the loveliest as well as gentlest beings ; and the gods live in the distance, amid notes of majestic thunder. I do not say that no 'surfeit' is ever there ; but I do, that there is no end of the 'nectared sweets.' In what other English poet (however superior to him in other respects) are you so *certain* of never opening a page without lighting upon the loveliest imagery and the most eloquent expressions ? Name one. Compare any succession of their pages at random, and see if the young poet is not sure to present his stock of beauty ; crude it may be, in many instances ; too indiscriminate in general ; never, perhaps, thoroughly perfect in cultivation ; but there it is, exquisite of its

kind, and filling envy with despair. He died at five-and-twenty ; he had not revised his earlier works, nor given his genius its last pruning. His *Endymion*, in resolving to be free from all critical trammels, had no versification ; and his last noble fragment, *Hyperion*, is not faultless,—but it is nearly so. The *Eve of St Agnes* betrays morbidity only in one instance (noticed in the comment). Even in his earliest productions, which are to be considered as those of youth just emerging from boyhood, are to be found passages of as masculine a beauty as ever were written. Witness the *Sonnet on reading Chapman's Homer*,—epical in the splendour and dignity of its images, and terminating with the noblest Greek simplicity. Among his finished productions, however, of any length, the *Eve of Saint Agnes* still appears to me the most delightful and complete specimen of his genius. It stands mid-way between his most sensitive ones (which, though of rare beauty, occasionally sink into feebleness) and the less generally characteristic majesty of the fragment of *Hyperion*. Doubtless his greatest poetry is to be found in *Hyperion* ; and had he lived, there is as little doubt he would have written chiefly in that strain ; rising superior to those languishments of love

which made the critics so angry, and which they might so easily have pardoned at his time of life. But the *Eve of St Agnes* had already bid most of them adieu,—exquisitely loving as it is. It is young, but full-grown poetry of the rarest description ; graceful as the beardless Apollo ; glowing and gorgeous with the colours of romance. I have therefore reprinted the whole of it in the present volume, together with the comment alluded to in the Preface ; especially as, in addition to felicity of treatment, its subject is in every respect a happy one, and helps to ‘paint’ this our bower of ‘poetry with delight.’ Melancholy, it is true, will ‘break in’ when the reader thinks of the early death of such a writer ; but it is one of the benevolent provisions of nature, that all good things tend to pleasure in the recollection ; when the bitterness of their loss is past, their own sweetness embalms them.

A thing of beauty is a joy for ever.

While writing this paragraph, a hand-organ out-of-doors has been playing one of the mournfullest and loveliest of the airs of Bellini—another genius who died young. The sound of music always gives a feeling

either of triumph or tenderness to the state of mind in which it is heard : in this instance it seemed like one departed spirit come to bear testimony to another, and to say how true indeed may be the union of sorrowful and sweet recollections.

Keats knew the youthful faults of his poetry as well as any man, as the reader may see by the preface to *Endymion*, and its touching though manly acknowledgment of them to critical candour. I have this moment read it again, after a lapse of years, and have been astonished to think how anybody could answer such an appeal to the mercy of strength, with the cruelty of weakness. All the good for which Mr Gifford pretended to be zealous, he might have effected with pain to no one, and glory to himself ; and therefore all the evil he mixed with it was of his own making. But the secret at the bottom of such unprovoked censure is exasperated inferiority. Young poets, upon the whole,—at least very young poets,—had better not publish at all. They are pretty sure to have faults ; and jealousy and envy are as sure to find them out, and wreak upon them their own disappointments. The critic is often an unsuccessful author, almost always an inferior one to a man of genius, and

possesses his sensibility neither to beauty nor to pain. If he does,—if by any chance he is a man of genius himself (and such things have been), sure and certain will be his regret, some day, for having given pains which he might have turned into noble pleasures ; and nothing will console him but that very charity towards himself, the grace of which can only be secured to us by our having denied it to no one.

Allusion, of course, is not here made to *all* the critics of the time, but only to such reigning reviewers as took earliest and most frequent notice of Keats. The *Edinburgh Review*, though not quick to speak of him, did so before he died, with a fervour of eulogy at least equal to its objections ; and I think I may add, that its then distinguished Editor (now a revered ornament of the Scottish bench) has since felt his admiration of the young poet increase, instead of diminish.

Let the student of poetry observe, that in all the luxury of the *Eve of Saint Agnes* there is nothing of the conventional craft of artificial writers ; no heaping up of words or similes for their own sakes or the rhyme's sake ; no gaudy common-places ; no borrowed airs of earnestness ; no tricks of inversion ;

no substitution of reading or of ingenious thoughts for feeling or spontaneity ; no irrelevancy or unfitness of any sort. All flows out of sincerity and passion. The writer is as much in love with the heroine as his hero is ; his description of the painted window, however gorgeous, has not an untrue or superfluous word ; and the only speck of a fault in the whole poem arises from an excess of emotion.

DANTE

[From the Preface to *Stories from the Italian Poets*]

BUT truly it is said, that when Dante is great, nobody surpasses him. I doubt if anybody equals him, as to the constant intensity and incessant variety of his pictures ; and whatever he paints, he throws, as it were, upon its own powers ; as though an artist should draw figures that started into life, and proceeded to action for themselves, frightening their creator. Every motion, word, and look of these creatures becomes full of sensibility and suggestions. The invisible is at the back of the visible ; darkness becomes palpable ; silence describes a character, nay, forms the most striking part of a story ; a word acts as a flash of lightning, which displays some gloomy neigh-

bourhood, where a tower is standing, with dreadful faces at the window ; or, where, at your feet, full of eternal voices, one abyss is beheld dropping out of another in the lurid light of torment. In the present volume a story will be found which tells a long tragedy in half-a-dozen lines. Dante has the minute probabilities of a Defoe in the midst of the loftiest and most generalizing poetry ; and this feeling of matter-of-fact is impressed by fictions the most improbable, nay, the most ridiculous and revolting. You laugh at the absurdity ; you are shocked at the detestable cruelty ; yet, for the moment, the thing almost seems as if it must be true. You feel as you do in a dream, and after it ; you wake and laugh, but the absurdity seemed true at the time ; and while you laugh you shudder.

Enough of this crueller part of his genius has been exhibited ; but it is seldom you can have the genius without sadness. In the circle of hell, soothsayers walk along weeping, with their faces turned the wrong way, so that their tears fall between their shoulders. The picture is still more dreadful. Warton thinks it ridiculous. But I cannot help feeling with the poet, that it is dreadfully pathetic. It is the last mortifying

insult to human pretension. Warton, who has a grudge against Dante natural to a man of happier piety, thinks him ridiculous also in describing the monster Geryon lying upon the edge of one of the gulfs of hell 'like a beaver' (ca. xvii). He is of opinion that the writer only does it to shew his knowledge of natural history. But surely the idea of so strange and awful a creature (a huge mild-faced man ending in a dragon's body) lying familiarly on the edge of the gulf, as a beaver does by the water, combines the supernatural with the familiar in a very impressive manner. It is this combination of extremes which is the life and soul of the whole poem; you have this world in the next; the same persons, passions, remembrances, intensified by superhuman despairs or beatitudes; the speechless entrancements of bliss, the purgatorial trials of hope and patience; the supports of hate and anger (such as they are) in hell itself; nay, of loving despairs, and a self-pity made unboundedly pathetic by endless suffering. Hence there is no love story so affecting as that of Paulo and Francesca thus told and perpetuated in another world; no father's misery so enforced upon us as Ugolino's, who, for hundreds of years, has not grown

tired of the revenge to which it wrought him. Dante even puts this weight and continuity of feeling into passages of mere transient emotion or illustration, unconnected with the next world ; as in the famous instance of the verses about evening, and many others which the reader will meet with in this volume. Indeed, if pathos and the most impressive simplicity, and graceful beauty of all kinds, and abundant grandeur, can pay (as the reader, I believe, will think it does even in a prose abstract), for the pangs of moral discord and absurdity inflicted by the perusal of Dante's poem, it may challenge competition with any in point of interest. His heaven, it is true, though containing both sublime and lovely passages, is not so good as his earth. The more unearthly he tries to make it, the less heavenly it became. When he is content with earth in heaven itself, when he literalises a metaphor, and with exquisite felicity finds himself *arrived there* in consequence of fixing his eyes on the eyes of Beatrice, then he is most celestial. But his endeavours to express degrees of beatitude and holiness by varieties of flame and light—of dancing lights, revolving lights, lights of smiles, of stars, of starry crosses, of didactic letters and sentences,

of animal figures made up of stars full of blessed souls, with saints *forming an eagle's beak* and David in its *eye*!—such superhuman attempts become for the most part tricks of theatrical machinery, on which we gaze with little curiosity and no respect.

His angels, however, are another matter. Belief was prepared for those winged human forms, and they furnished him with some of his most beautiful combinations of the natural with the supernatural. Ginguéné has remarked the singular variety as well as beauty of Dante's angels. Milton's, indeed, are commonplace in the comparison. In the eighth canto of the *Inferno*, the devils insolently refuse the poet and his guide an entrance into the city of Dis : an angel comes sweeping over the Stygian lake to enforce it ; the noise of his wings makes the shores tremble, and is like a crashing whirlwind such as beats down the trees and sends the peasants and their herds flying before it. The heavenly messenger, after rebuking the devils, touches the portals of the city with his wand ; they fly open ; and he returns the way he came without uttering a word to the two companions. His face was that of one occupied with other thoughts. This angel is announced by a tempest. Another,

who brings the souls of the departed to purgatory, is first discovered at a distance, gradually disclosing white splendours, which are his wings and garments. He comes in a boat, of which his wings are the sails ; and as he approaches, it is impossible to look him in the face for its brightness. Two other angels have green wings and green garments, and the drapery is kept in motion like a flag by the vehement action of the wings. A fifth has a face like the morning star, casting forth quivering beams. A sixth is of a lustre so oppressive, that the poet feels a weight on his eyes before he knows what is coming. Another's presence affects the senses like the fragrance of a May morning ; and another is in garments dark as cinders, but has a sword in his hand too sparkling to be gazed at. Dante's occasional pictures of the beauties of external nature are worthy of these angelic creations, and to the last degree fresh and lovely. You long to bathe your eyes, smarting with the fumes of hell, in his dews. You gaze enchanted on his green fields and his celestial blue skies, the more so from the pain and sorrow in midst of which the visions are created.

Dante's grandeur of every kind is pro-

portionate to that of his angels, almost to his ferocity : and that is saying everything. It is not always the spiritual grandeur of Milton, the subjection of the material impression to the moral ; but it is equally such when he chooses, and far more abundant. His infernal precipices—his black whirlwinds—his innumerable cries and clasping of hands—his very odours of huge loathsomeness—his giants at twilight standing up to the middle in pits, like towers, and causing earthquakes when they move—his earthquake of the mountain in purgatory, when a spirit is set free for heaven—his dignified Mantuan Sordello, silently regarding him and his guide as they go by, ‘like a lion on his watch’—his blasphemer, Capaneus, lying in unconquered rage and sullenness under an eternal rain of flakes of fire (human precursor of Milton’s Satan)—his aspect of paradise, ‘as if the universe had smiled’—his inhabitants of the whole planet Saturn crying out *so loud*, in accordance with the anti-papal indignation of Saint Petro Damiano, that the poet, though among them *could not hear what they said*—and the blushing eclipse, like red clouds at sunset, which takes place at the apostle Peter’s denunciation of the sanguinary filth of the court of Rome—all

these sublimities, and many more, make us not know whether to be more astonished at the greatness of the poet or the raging littleness of the man. Grievous is it to be forced to bring two such opposites together ; and I wish, for the honour and glory of poetry, I did not feel compelled to do so. But the swarthy Florentine had not the healthy temperament of his brethren, and he fell upon evil times. Compared with Homer and Shakespeare, his very intensity seems only superior to theirs from an excess of the morbid ; and he is inferior to both in other sovereign qualities of poetry—to the one, in giving you the healthiest general impression of Nature itself—to Shakespeare, in boundless universality—to most great poets, in thorough harmony and delightfulness. He wanted (generally speaking) the music of a happy and a happy-making disposition. Homer, from his large vital bosom, breathes like a broad fresh air over the world, amidst alternate storm and sunshine, making you aware that there is rough work to be faced, but also activity and beauty to be enjoyed. The feeling of health and strength is predominant. Life laughs at death itself, or meets it with a noble confidence—is not taught to dread it as a

malignant goblin. Shakespeare has all the smiles as well as tears of nature, and discerns the 'soul of goodness in things evil.' He is comedy as well as tragedy—the entire man in all his qualities, moods, and experiences : and he beautifies all. And both those truly divine poets make nature their subject through her own inspiriting medium—not through the darkened glass of one man's spleen and resentment. Dante, in constituting himself the hero of his poem, not only renders her, in the general impression, as dreary as himself, in spite of the occasional beautiful pictures he draws of her, but narrows her very immensity into his pettiness. He fancied, alas, that he could build her universe over again out of the politics of old Rome and the divinity of the schools !

Dante, besides his great poem, and a few Latin eclogues of no great value, wrote lyrics full of Platonical sentiment, some of which anticipated the loveliest of Petrarch's ; and he was the author of various prose works, political and philosophical, all more or less masterly for the time in which he lived, and all coadjutors of his poetry in fixing his native tongue. His account of his Early Life (the *Vita Nuova*) is a most

engaging history of a boyish passion, evidently as real and true on his own side as love and truth can be, whatever might be its mistake as to its object. The treatise on the Vernacular Tongue (*de Vulgari Eloquentia*) shews how critically he considered his materials for impressing the world, and what a reader he was of every production of his contemporaries. The Banquet (*Convito*) is but an abstruse commentary on some of his minor poems; but the book on Monarchy (*de Monarchia*) is a compound of ability and absurdity, in which his great genius is fairly overborne by the barbarous pedantry of the age. It is an argument to prove that the world must all be governed by one man; that this one man must be the successor of the Roman Emperor—God having manifestly designed the world to be subject for ever to the Roman Empire; and lastly, that this Emperor is equally designed by God to be independent of the Pope—spiritually subject to him, indeed, but so far only as a good son is subject to the religious advice of his father; and thus making Church and State happy for ever in the two divided supremacies. And all this assumption of the obsolete and impossible the author gravely proves in all the forms of logic, by argu-

ments drawn from the history of Æneas, and the providential cackle of the Roman geese !

How can the patriots of modern Italy, justified as they are in extolling the poet to the skies, see him plunge into such depths of bigotry in his verse and childishness in his prose, and consent to perplex the friends of advancement with making a type of their success out of so erring though so great a man ? Such slavishness, even to such greatness, is a poor and unpromising thing, compared with an altogether unprejudiced and forward-looking self-reliance. To have no faith in names has been announced as one of their principles ; and ‘God and Humanity’ is their motto. What, therefore, has Dante’s name to do with their principles ? Or what have the semi-barbarisms of the thirteenth century to do with the final triumph of ‘God and Humanity’ ? Dante’s lauded wish for that union of the Italian States, which his fame had led them so fondly to identify with their own, was but a portion of his greater and prouder wish to see the whole world at the feet of his boasted ancestress, Rome. Not, of course, that he had no view to what he considered good and just government (for what sane despot purposes to rule without that ?) ; but his

good and just government was always to be founded on the *sine qua non* principle of universal Italian domination. *

All that Dante said or did has its interest for us in spite of his errors, because he was an earnest and suffering man and a great genius ; but his fame must ever continue to lie where his greatest blame does, in his principal work. He was a gratuitous logician, a preposterous politician, a cruel theologian ; but his wonderful imagination, and (considering the bitterness that was in him) still more wonderful sweetness, have gone into the hearts of his fellow-creatures, and will remain there in spite of the moral and religious absurdities with which they are

* Everybody sees this who is not wilfully blind. ‘Passionate,’ says the editor of the *Opere Minori*, ‘for the ancient Italian glories, and the greatness of the Roman name, he was of opinion that it was only by means of combined strength, and one common government, that Italy could be finally secured from discord in its own bosom and enemies from without, *and recover its ancient empire over the whole world.*’ ‘Amantissimo delle antiche glorie Italiane, e della grandezza del nome romano, ei considerava, che soltanto pel mezzo d’una general forza ed autorità poteva l’Italia dalle interne contese e dalle straniere invasioni restarsi sicura, *e recuperare l’ antico imperio sopra tutte le genti.*’—*ut sup.* vol. iii, p. 8.—L. H.

mingled, and of the inability which the best-natured readers feel to associate his entire memory, as a poet, with their usual personal delight in a poet and his name.

SWIFT

[From *Wit and Humour*]

FOR the qualities of sheer wit and humour, Swift had no superior, ancient or modern. He had not the poetry of Aristophanes, or the animal spirits of Rabelais ; he was not so incessantly witty as Butler ; nor did he possess the delicacy of Addison, or the good nature of Steele or Fielding, or the pathos and depth of Sterne ; but his wit was perfect, as such ; a sheer meeting of the extremes of difference and likeness ; and his knowledge of character was unbounded. He knew the humour of great and small, from the king down to the cook-maid. Unfortunately, he was not a healthy man ; his entrance into the Church put him into a false position ; mysterious circumstances in his personal history conspired with worldly disappointment to aggravate it ; and that hypochondriacal insight into things, which might have taught him a doubt of his conclusions and the wisdom of patience, ended in making

him the victim of a diseased blood and angry passion. Probably there was something morbid even in his excessive coarseness. Most of his contemporaries were coarse, but not so outrageously as he.

When Swift, however, was at his best, who was so lively, so entertaining, so original? He has been said to be indebted to this and that classic, and this and that Frenchman; to Lucian, to Rabelais, and to Cyrano de Bergerac; but though he was acquainted with all these writers, their thoughts had been evidently thought by himself; their quaint fancies of things had passed through his own mind; and they ended in results quite masterly, and his own. A great fanciful wit like his wanted no helps to the discovery of Brobdingnag and Laputa. The Big and Little Endians were close to him every day, at court and at church.

Swift took his principal measure from Butler, and he emulated his rhymes; yet his manner is his own. There is a mixture of care and precision in it, announcing at once power and fastidiousness, like Mr Dean going with his verger before him, in flowing gown and five-times washed face, with his nails pared to the quick. His long irregular prose verses, with rhymes at the end, are an

invention of his own ; and a similar mixture is discernible even in those, not excepting a feeling of musical proportion. Swift had more music in him than he loved to let ‘fiddlers’ suppose ; and throughout all his writings there may be observed a jealous sense of power, modifying the most familiar of his impulses.

After all, however, Swift’s verse, compared with Pope’s or with Butler’s, is but a kind of smart prose. It wants their pregnancy of expression. His greatest works are *Gulliver’s Travels* and the *Tale of a Tub*.

BUTLER

[From *Wit and Humour*]

BUTLER is the wittiest of English poets, and at the same time he is one of the most learned, and what is more, one of the wisest. His *Hudibras*, though naturally the most popular of his works from its size, subject, and witty excess, was an accident of birth and party compared with his *Miscellaneous Poems* ; yet both abound in thoughts as great and deep as the surface is sparkling ; and his genius altogether, having the additional recommendation of verse, might have given him a fame greater than Rabelais, had

his animal spirits been equal to the rest of his qualifications for a universalist. At the same time, though not abounding in poetic sensibility, he was not without it. He is author of the touching simile,

*True as the dial to the sun,
Although it be not shin'd upon.*

The following is as elegant as anything in Lovelace or Waller :—

—What security's too strong
To guard that gentle heart from wrong,
That to its friend is glad to pass
Itself away, and all it has,
And like an anchorite, gives over
This world for the heaven of a lover ?

And *this*, if read with the seriousness and singleness of feeling that become it, is, I think, a comparison full of as much grandeur as cordiality,—

*Like Indian widows, gone to bed
In flaming curtains to the dead.*

You would sooner have looked for it in one of Marvel's poems, than in *Hudibras*.

Butler has little humour. His two heroes, Hudibras and Ralph, are not so much humorists as pedants. They are as little like their prototypes, Don Quixote and

Sancho, as two dreary puppets are unlike excesses of humanity. They are not even consistent with their other prototypes, the Puritans, or with themselves, for they are dull fellows, unaccountably gifted with the author's wit. In this respect, and as a narrative, the poem is a failure. Nobody ever thinks of the story, except to wonder at its inefficiency ; or of Hudibras himself, except as described at his outset. He is nothing but a ludicrous figure. But considered as a banter issuing from the author's own lips, on the wrong side of Puritanism, and indeed on all the pedantic and hypocritical abuses of human reason, the whole production is a marvellous compound of wit, learning, and felicitous execution. The wit is pure and incessant ; the learning as quaint and out-of-the-way as the subject ; the very rhymes are echoing scourges, made of the peremptory and the incongruous. This is one of the reasons why the rhymes have been so much admired. They are laughable, not merely in themselves, but from the masterly will and violence with which they are made to correspond to the absurdities they lash. The most extraordinary licence is assumed as a matter of course ; the accentuation jerked out of its place with all the indiffer-

ence and effrontery of a reason 'sufficing unto itself.' The poem is so peculiar in this respect, the laughing delight of the reader so well founded, and the passages so sure to be accompanied with a full measure of wit and knowledge, that I have retained its best rhymes throughout, and thus brought them together for the first time.

Butler, like the great wit of the opposite party, Marvel, was an honest man, fonder of his books than of worldly success, and superior to party itself in regard to final principles. He wrote a satire on the follies and vices of the court, which is most likely the reason why it is doubted whether he ever got anything by *Hudibras*; and he was so little prejudiced in favour of the scholarship he possessed, that he vindicated the born poet above the poet of books, and would not have Shakespeare tried by a Grecian standard.

BIOGRAPHICAL AND
AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL

[LEIGH HUNT published his *Autobiography* in 1850. In writing it he used some of the material of *Lord Byron and his Contemporaries*, but, as is pointed out elsewhere, the style, spirit and compass of the two books are quite distinct. The *Autobiography* was the product of Hunt's age, which was made comparatively peaceful and comfortable by the enjoyment of grants and pensions and the homage of almost all his peers in art and letters. Several critics have regarded it as its author's best work, and, certainly, by reason of the information it gives us of the poets and writers of the early nineteenth century, it is one of the most interesting. The opening chapters deal with Hunt's boyhood and school-days at Christ's Hospital. The pages concerned with the writer's intimacy with Shelley, Keats, Byron, Coleridge, and Wordsworth are among the most entertaining of the volume, and it is from these that the following selection has been made. Of the *Autobiography*, the best edition is the handsome one prepared by Mr Roger Ingpen, in 1903.]

BYRON

[From *Lord Byron and some of his Contemporaries*, 1824.

This is no place to discuss the Hunt-Byron controversy, raised by the publication of this book. Yet whichever side of the question one takes, one cannot but admit, that the book gives us a revelation both of Byron and his critic. Most of the editors of Leigh Hunt, for some reason or other, have not included in their selections anything from this book. Yet as a piece of literature, *Lord Byron* is incomparably more interesting than the mildly anecdotal pages devoted to the author of *Don Juan* in the *Autobiography*. The earlier work had a stimulus—anger, compared with which, from the literary point of view, the forgivingness and charity that come of the inability to maintain any more exhausting sensations—age, in other words—are a poor substitute.

Anyone who delights in piquant contrasts should compare Hunt's picture of Lord Byron with that drawn by the Countess Guiccioli in her *Memoirs*.]

IF Lord Byron had been a man of address, he would have been a kinder man. He never heartily forgave you or himself for his deficiency on this point, and hence a good deal of his ill temper and his carelessness of your feelings. By any means, fair or foul, he was to make up for the disadvantage ; and with all his exaction of conventional propriety from others, he could set it at nought in his own conduct in the most remarkable manner. He had an in-

continence, I believe unique, in talking of his affairs, and showing you other people's letters. He would even make you presents of them ; and I have accepted one or two that they might go no farther. But I have mentioned this before. If his five hundred confidants, by a reticence as remarkable as his laxity, had not kept his secrets better than he did himself, the very devil might have been played with I know not how many people.

But there was always this saving reflection to be made, that the man who could be guilty of such extravagances for the sake of making an impression, might be guilty of exaggerating or inventing what astonished you ; and indeed though he was a speaker of the truth on ordinary occasions, that is to say, he did not tell you he had seen a dozen horses when he had only seen two, —yet as he professed not to value the truth when in the way of his advantage (and there was nothing he thought more to his advantage than making you stare at him) the persons who were liable to suffer from his incontinence, had all the right in the world to the benefit of this consideration.

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Lord Byron's superstition was remarkable. I do not mean in the ordinary sense, because

it was superstition, but because it was petty and old-womanish. He believed in the ill-luck of Fridays, and was seriously disconcerted if anything was to be done on that frightful day of the week. Had he been a Roman, he would have started at crows, while he made a jest at Augurs. He used to tell a story of somebody's meeting him, while in Italy, in St James's Street. The least and most childish of superstitions may, it is true, find subtle corners of warrant in the greatest minds ; but as the highest pictures in Lord Byron's poetry were imitative, so in the smallest of his personal superstitions, he was maintained by something not his own. His turn of mind was material : egotism and some remarkable experiences had given it a temporary twist the other way ; but it never grew kindly or loftily in that quarter. Hence, his taking refuge from uneasy thoughts in sarcasm and trifling and notoriety. What there is of good-natured philosophy in *Don Juan* was not foreign to his wishes ; but it was the commonplace of the age, repeated with an air of discovery by the noble lord and as ready to be thrown in the teeth of those from whom he had taken it, provided anybody laughed at them. His soul might well have been met in St James's

Street, for in the remotest of his poetical solitudes it was there. As to those who attribute the superstition of men of letters to infidelity, and then object to it for being inconsistent, because it is credulous, there is no greater inconsistency than their own ; for, as it is the very essence of infidelity to doubt, so according to the nature it inhabits, it may as well doubt whether such and such things do not exist as whether they do : whereas, on the other hand, belief in particular dogmas by the very nature of its tie is precluded from this uncertainty, perhaps at the expense of being more foolishly certain.

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Lord Byron had no conversation, properly speaking. He could not interchange ideas or information with you, as a man of letters is expected to do. His thoughts required the concentration of silence and study to bring them to a head ; and they deposited the amount in the shape of a stanza. His acquaintance with books was very circumscribed. The same personal experience, however, upon which he drew for his authorship might have rendered him a companion more interesting by far than men who could talk better : and the great reason why his conversation disappointed you was,

not that he had not anything to talk about, but that he was haunted by a perpetual affectation, and could not talk sincerely. It was only by fits that he spoke with any gravity, or made his extraordinary disclosures ; and at no time did you know well what to believe. The rest was all quip and crank, not of the pleasantest kind, and equally distinct from simplicity or wit. The best thing to say of it was, that he knew playfulness to be consistent with greatness, and the worst, that he thought everything in him was great, even to his vulgarities. Mr Shelley said of him, that he never made you laugh to your ease and own content. This, however, was said latterly after my friend had been disappointed by a close intimacy. Mr Shelley's opinion of his natural powers in every respect was great ; and there is reason to believe that Byron never talked with any man to so much purpose as he did with him. He looked upon him as his most admiring listener ; and probably was never less under the influence of affectation. If he could have got rid of this and his title, he would have talked like a man ; not like a mere man of the town, or a great spoilt school-boy. It is not to be concluded that his jokes were not now and then very happy,

or that admirers of his Lordship, who paid him visits did not often go away more admiring. I am speaking of his conversation in general, and of the impression it made upon you, compared with what was to be expected from a man of wit and experience. He had a delicate white hand, of which he was proud ; and he attracted attention to it by rings. He thought a hand of this description almost the only remaining mark of a gentleman ; of which it certainly is not, nor of a lady either ; though a coarse one implies handiwork. He often appeared holding a handkerchief, upon which his jewelled fingers lay imbedded, as in a picture. He was as fond of fine linen as a quaker ; and had the remnant of his hair oiled and trimmed with all the anxiety of Sardanapalus.

The visible character to which this effeminacy gave rise appears to have indicated itself as early as his travels in the Levant, where the Grand Seignior is said to have taken him for a woman in disguise. But he had tastes of a more masculine description. He was fond of swimming to the last, and used to push out to a good distance in the Gulf of Genoa. He was also, as I have mentioned before, a good horseman ; and he liked to have a great dog or two about him, which is

not a habit observable in timid men. Yet I doubt greatly whether he was a man of courage. I suspect that personal anxiety, coming upon a constitution unwisely treated had no small hand in hastening his death in Greece.

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To lump together some of his more personal habits, in the style of old Aubrey, he spelt affectedly, swore somewhat, had the Northumbrian burr in his speech, did not like to see women eat, and would merrily say, that he had another reason for not liking to dine with them ; which was that they always had the wings of chicken. He has added another to the list of the Whartons and Buckinghams, though his vices were in one respect more prudent, his genius greater, and his end a great deal more lucky.

Perverse from birth, educated under personal disadvantages, debauched by evil companions, and perplexed between real and false pretensions, the injuries done to his nature were completed by a success too great even for the genius he possessed ; and as his life was never so unfortunate as when it appeared to be most otherwise, so nothing could happen more seasonably for him, or give him what he would have most desired under any circumstances than his death.

IMPRISONMENT

[From the *Autobiography*, 1850]

WE parted* in hackney-coaches to our respective abodes, accompanied by two tipstaves apiece, and myself by my friend Barron Field.

The tipstaves prepared me for a singular character in my gaoler. His name was Ives. I was told he was a very self-willed personage, not the more accommodating for being in a bad state of health ; and that he called everybody *Mister*. 'In short,' said one of the tipstaves, 'he is one as may be led, but he'll never be *druv*.'

The sight of the prison-gate and the high wall was a dreary business. I thought of my horseback and the downs of Brighton ; but congratulated myself, at all events, that I had come thither with a good conscience. After waiting in the prison-yard as long as if it had been the anteroom of a minister, I was ushered into the presence of the great man. He was in his parlour, which was decently furnished, and he had a basin of broth before him, which he quitted on my appearance, and rose with much solemnity to meet me. He seemed about fifty years

* *i.e.*, Leigh Hunt and his brother John, who were sentenced to imprisonment at the same time.—[ED.]

of age. He had a white night-cap on, as if he was going to be hanged, and a great red face, which looked as if he had been hanged already, or were ready to burst with blood. Indeed, he was not allowed by his physician to speak in a tone above a whisper.

The first thing which this dignified person said was, 'Mister, I'd ha' given a matter of a hundred pounds, that you had not come to this place—a hundred pounds!' The emphasis which he had laid on the word 'hundred' was ominous.

I forgot what I answered. I endeavoured to make the best of the matter; but he recurred over and over again to the hundred pounds; and said he wondered, for his part, what the Government meant by sending me there, for the prison was not a prison fit for a gentleman. He often repeated this opinion afterwards, adding, with a peculiar nod of his head, 'And, Mister, they knows it.'

I said, that if a gentleman deserved to be sent to prison, he ought not to be treated with a greater nicety than any one else: upon which he corrected me, observing very properly (though, as the phrase is, it was one word for the gentleman and two for the letter of prison-lodgings), that a person who had been used to a better mode of living

than 'low people' was not treated with the same justice, if forced to lodge exactly as they did.

I told him his observation was very true ; which gave him a favourable opinion of my understanding ; for I had many occasions of remarking, that he looked upon nobody as his superior, speaking even of members of the royal family as persons whom he knew very well, and whom he estimated at no higher rate than became him. One royal duke had lunched in his parlour, and another he had laid under some polite obligation. 'They knows me,' said he, 'very well, Mister ; and, Mister, I knows them.' This concluding sentence he uttered with great particularity and precision.

He was not proof, however, against a Greek Pindar, which he happened to light upon one day among my books. Its unintelligible character gave him a notion that he had got somebody to deal with, who might really know something which he did not. Perhaps the gilt leaves and red morocco binding had their share in the magic. The upshot was, that he always showed himself anxious to appear well with me, as a clever fellow, treating me with great civility on all occasions but one, when I made him very

angry by disappointing him in a money amount. The Pindar was a mystery that staggered him. I remember very well, that giving me a long account one day of something connected with his business, he happened to catch with his eye the shelf that contained it, and, whether he saw it or not, abruptly finished by observing, 'But, Mister, you knows all these things as well as I do.'

Upon the whole, my new acquaintance was as strange a person as I ever met with. A total want of education, together with a certain vulgar acuteness, conspired to render him insolent and pedantic. Disease sharpened his tendency to fits of passion, which threatened to suffocate him; and then in his intervals of better health he would issue forth, with his cock-up-nose and his hat on one side, as great a fop as a jockey. I remember his coming to my rooms, about the middle of my imprisonment, as if on purpose to insult over my ill-health with the contrast of his convalescence, putting his arms in a gay manner a-kimbo, and telling me I should never live to go out, whereas he was riding about as stout as ever, and had just been in the country. He died before I left prison.

The word *jail*, in deference to the way in

which it is sometimes spelt, this accomplished individual pronounced *gole*; and Mr Brougham he always spoke of as Mr *Bruffam*. He one day apologised for this mode of pronunciation, or rather gave a specimen of vanity and self-will, which will show the reader the high notions a jailer may entertain of himself. 'I find,' said he, 'that they calls him *Broom*; but, Mister' (assuming a look from which there was to be no appeal), '*I* calls him *Bruffam*!'

Finding that my host did not think the prison fit for me, I asked if he could let me have an apartment in his house. He pronounced it impossible; which was a trick to enhance the price. I could not make an offer to please him; and he stood out so long, and, as he thought, so cunningly, that he subsequently overreached himself by his trickery, as the reader will see. His object was to keep me among the prisoners, till he could at once sicken me of the place, and get the permission of the magistrates to receive me into his house; which was a thing he reckoned upon as a certainty. He thus hoped to secure himself in all quarters; for his vanity was almost as strong as his avarice. He was equally fond of getting money in private, and of the approbation of

the great men whom he had to deal with in public ; and it so happened, that there had been no prisoner, above the poorest condition, before my arrival, with the exception of Colonel Despard. From abusing the prison, he then suddenly fell to speaking well of it, or rather of the room occupied by the colonel ; and said, that another corresponding with it would make me a capital apartment. ‘To be sure,’ said he, ‘there is nothing but bare walls, and I have no bed to put in it.’ I replied, that of course I should not be hindered from having my own bed from home. He said, ‘No ; and if it rains,’ observed he, ‘you have only to put up with want of light for a time.’ ‘What !’ exclaimed I, ‘are there no windows ?’ ‘Windows, Mister !’ cried he ; ‘no windows in a prison of this sort ; no glass, Mister : but excellent shutters.’

It was finally agreed, that I should sleep for a night or two in a garret of the gaoler’s house, till my bed could be got ready in the prison and the windows glazed. A dreary evening followed, which, however, let me completely into the man’s character, and showed him in a variety of lights, some ludicrous, and others as melancholy. There was a full-length portrait in the room, of a

little girl, dized out in her best. This, he told me, was his daughter, whom he had disinherited for her disobedience. I tried to suggest a few reflections, capable of doing her service ; but disobedience, I found, was an offence doubly irritating to his nature, on account of his sovereign habits as a gaoler ; and seeing his irritability likely to inflame the plethora of his countenance, I desisted. Though not allowed to speak above a whisper, he was extremely willing to talk ; but at an early hour I pleaded my own state of health, and retired to bed.

On taking possession of my garret, I was treated with a piece of delicacy, which I never should have thought of finding in a prison. When I first entered its walls, I had been received by the under-gaoler, a man who seemed an epitome of all that was forbidding in his office. He was short and very thick, had a hook-nose, a great severe countenance, and a bunch of keys hanging on his arm. A friend stopped short at sight of him, and said, in a melancholy tone, ‘And this is the gaoler !’

Honest old *Cave* ! thine outside would have been unworthy of thee, if upon further acquaintance I had not found it a very hearty outside—ay, and in my eyes, a very good-

looking one, and as fit to contain the milk of human kindness that was in thee, as the husk of a cocoa. To show by one specimen the character of this man—I could never prevail on him to accept any acknowledgment of his kindness, greater than a set of tea-things, and a piece or two of old furniture, which I could not well carry away. I had, indeed, the pleasure of leaving him in possession of a room which I had papered ; but this was a thing unexpected, and which neither of us had supposed could be done. Had I been a prince, I would have forced on him a pension ; being a journalist, I made him accept an *Examiner* weekly, which he lived for some years to relish his Sunday pipe with.

This man, in the interval between my arrival and my introduction to the head-gaoler, had found means to give me further information respecting my condition, and to express the interest he took in it. I thought little of his offers at the time. He behaved with the greatest air of deference to his principal ; moving as fast as his body would allow him, to execute his least intimation ; and holding the candle to him while he read, with an obsequious zeal. But he had spoken to his wife about me, and his wife I found

to be as great a curiosity as himself. Both were more like the romantic gaolers drawn in some of our modern plays, than real Horsemonger-lane palpabilities. The wife, in her person, was as light and fragile as the husband was sturdy. She had the nerves of a fine lady, and yet went through the most unpleasant duties with the patience of a martyr. Her voice and look seemed to plead for a softness like their own, as if a loud reply would have shattered her. Ill-health had made her a Methodist, but this did not hinder her from sympathising with an invalid who was none, or from loving a husband who was as little of a saint as need be. Upon the whole, such an extraordinary couple, so apparently unsuitable, and yet so fitted for one another ; so apparently vulgar on one side, and yet so naturally delicate on both ; so misplaced in their situation, and yet for the good of others so admirably put there, I have never met with before or since.

It was the business of this woman to lock me up in my garret ; but she did it so softly the first night, that I knew nothing of the matter. The night following, I thought I heard a gentle tampering with the lock. I tried it, and found it fastened. She heard

me as she was going down-stairs, and said the next day, 'Ah, sir, I thought I should have turned the key so as for you not to hear it ; but I found you did.' The whole conduct of this couple towards us, from first to last, was of a piece with this singular delicacy. . . .

But I possessed another surprise ; which was a garden. There was a little yard outside the room, railed off from another belonging to the neighbouring ward. This yard I shut in with green pailings, adorned it with a trellis, bordered it with a thick bed of earth from a nursery, and even contrived to have a grass-plot. The earth I filled with flowers and young trees. There was an apple-tree, from which we managed to get a pudding the second year. As to my flowers, they were allowed to be perfect. Thomas Moore, who came to see me with Lord Byron, told me he had seen no such heart's-ease. I bought the *Parnaso Italiano* while in prison, and used often to think of a passage in it, while looking at this miniature piece of horticulture :—

Mio picciol orto,
A me sei vigna, e campo, e selva, e prato.—BALDI

My little garden,
To me thou'rt vineyard, field, and meadow, and wood.

Here I wrote and read in fine weather, sometimes under an awning. In autumn, my trellises were hung with scarlet-runners, which added to the flowery investment. I used to shut my eyes in my arm-chair, and affect to think myself hundreds of miles off.

But my triumph was in issuing forth of a morning. A wicket out of the garden led into the large one belonging to the prison. The latter was only for vegetables ; but it contained a cherry-tree, which I saw twice in blossom. I parcelled out the ground in my imagination into favourite districts. I made a point of dressing myself as if for a long walk ; and then, putting on my gloves, and taking my book under my arm, stepped forth, requesting my wife not to wait dinner if I was too late. My eldest little boy, to whom Lamb addressed some charming verses on the occasion, was my constant companion, and we used to play all sorts of juvenile games together. It was, probably, in dreaming of one of these games (but the words had a more touching effect on my ear) that he exclaimed one night in his sleep, 'No : I'm not lost ; I'm found.' Neither he nor I were very strong at that time ; but I have lived to see him a man of

eight and forty ; and wherever he is found, a generous hand and a great understanding will be found together.*

I entered prison the 3rd of February, 1813, and removed to my new apartments the 16th of March, happy to get out of the noise of the chains. When I sat amidst my books, and saw the imaginary sky overhead, and my paper roses about me, I drank in the quiet at my ears, as if they were thirsty. The little room was my bedroom. I afterwards made the two rooms change characters,

* A kind relative supplies an anecdote of this period. 'Mrs Leigh Hunt, having occasion to make some purchases in town, went, accompanied by her sister, and by this little boy, then in petticoats. She returned in a coach : and when it stopped at the prison gates the driver opened the coach-door, and, apologizing for the liberty he was taking, said that, as it seemed unlikely that ladies should be visiting any one *else* in that prison he presumed we came to see Mr Leigh Hunt. When answered that he spoke to Mrs Hunt, he became agitated, asked her if that was her child, and learning that it was, he caught the child up in his arms and kissed it passionately. He explained his agitation by saying, that what Mr Leigh Hunt had said about military flogging, had been the means of saving his son from the infliction ; and that he should for ever bless his name. He would not hear of taking any payment. This circumstance was naturally most grateful to Mr Leigh Hunt's feelings. He had suffered for his advocacy of the soldier's cause ; but he had not suffered in vain'—[THORNTON HUNT's *Note*].

when my wife lay in. Permission for her continuance with me at that period was easily obtained of the magistrates, among whom a new-comer made his appearance. This was another good-natured man, Lord Leslie, afterwards Earl of Rothes.* He heard me with kindness ; and his actions did not belie his countenance. My eldest girl (now, alas ! no more) was born in prison. She was beautiful, and for the greatest part of an existence of thirty years, she was happy. She was christened Mary after my mother, and Florimel after one of Spenser's heroines. But Mary we called her. Never shall I forget my sensations when she came into the world ; for I was obliged to play the physician myself, the hour having taken us by surprise. But her mother found many unexpected comforts : and during the whole time of her confinement, which happened to be in very fine weather, the garden door was set open, and she looked upon trees and flowers. A thousand recollections rise within me at every fresh period of my imprisonment, such as I cannot trust myself with dwelling upon.

* George William, twelfth earl of that name. He died a few years afterwards.—[L. H.]

KEATS, LAMB, AND COLERIDGE

AND now to speak of Keats, who was introduced to me by his schoolmaster's son, Charles Cowden Clarke, a man of a most genial nature and corresponding poetical taste, admirably well qualified to nourish the genius of his pupil.

I had not known the young poet long, when Shelley and he became acquainted under my roof. Keats did not take to Shelley as kindly as Shelley did to him. Shelley's only thoughts of his new acquaintance were such as regarded his bad health, with which he sympathised, and his poetry, of which he has left such a monument of his admiration in *Adonais*. Keats, being a little too sensitive on the score of his origin, felt inclined to see in every man of birth a sort of natural enemy. Their styles in writing also were very different; and Keats, notwithstanding his unbounded sympathies with ordinary flesh and blood, and even the transcendental cosmopolitics of *Hyperion*, was so far inferior in universality to his great acquaintance, that he could not accompany him in his dædal rounds with nature, and his Archimedean endeavours to move the

globe with his own hands. I am bound to state thus much ; because, hopeless of recovering his health, under circumstances that made the feeling extremely bitter, an irritable morbidity appears even to have driven his suspicions to excess ; and this not only with regard to the acquaintance whom he might reasonably suppose to have had some advantages over him, but to myself, who had none ; for I learned the other day, with extreme pain, such as I am sure so kind and reflecting a man as Mr Monckton Milnes would not have inflicted on me could he have foreseen it, that Keats at one period of his intercourse with us suspected both Shelley and myself of a wish to see him undervalued ! Such are the tricks which constant infelicity can play with the most noble natures. For Shelley, let *Adonais* answer. For myself, let every word answer which I uttered about him, living and dead, and such as I now proceed to repeat. I might as well have been told that I wished to see the flowers or the stars undervalued, or my own heart that loved him.

But it was sickness, and passed away. It appears, by Mr Milnes' book, that all his friends dissatisfied him in the course of those

trials of his temper ; and my friend Mr Milnes, will allow me to say, that those Letters and Remains of the young poet were not among his happiest effusions, nor wanting to supply a certain force of character to his memory. That memory possessed force enough already for those who were qualified to discern it ; and those who were not, hardly deserved to have their own notions of energy flattered at the poet's expense. Keats was already known to have personally chastised a blackguard, and to have been the author of *Hyperion* :

That large utterance of the early gods.

What more could have been necessary to balance the trembling excess of sensibility in his earlier poems ! The world has few enough incarnations of poets themselves in Arcadian shapes, to render necessary any deterioration of such as it has the luck to possess.

But perhaps my own personal feelings induce me to carry this matter too far. In the publication alluded to is a contemptuous reference (not by Mr Milnes) to a paper in the *Examiner* on the season of Christmas. I turned to it with new feelings of anxiety ; and there I found no warrant for such

reference, unless a certain tone of self-complacency, so often regretted in this autobiography, can have justified it.

Keats appears to have been of opinion that I ought to have taken more notice of what the critics said against him. And perhaps I ought. My notices of them may not have been sufficient. I may have too much contented myself with panegyricizing his genius, and thinking the objections to it of no ultimate importance. Had he given me a hint to another effect, I should have acted upon it. But in truth, as I have before intimated, I did not see a twentieth part of what was said against us; nor had I the slightest notion, at that period, that he took criticism so much to heart. I was in the habit, though a public man, of living in a world of abstractions of my own; and I regarded him as of a nature still more abstracted, and sure of renown. Though I was a politician (so to speak), I had scarcely a political work in my library. Spensers and Arabian Tales filled up the shelves; and Spenser himself was not remoter, in my eyes, from all the common-places of life, than my new friend. Our whole talk was made up of idealisms. In the streets we were in the thick of the old woods. I little suspected,

as I did afterwards, that the hunters had struck him ; and never at any time did I suspect that he could have imagined it desired by his friends. Let me quit the subject of so afflicting a delusion.

In everything but this reserve, which was to a certain extent encouraged by my own incuriousness (for I have no reserve myself with those whom I love)—in every other respect but this, Keats and I might have been taken for friends of the old stamp, between whom there was no such thing even as obligation, except the pleasure of it. I could not love him as deeply as I did Shelley. That was impossible. But my affection was only second to the one which I entertained for that heart of hearts. Keats, like Shelley himself, enjoyed the usual privilege of greatness with all whom he knew, rendering it delightful to be obliged by him, and an equal, but not greater, delight to oblige. It was a pleasure to his friends to have him in their houses, and he did not grudge it. When *Endymion* was published, he was living at Hampstead with his friend, Charles Armitage Brown, who attended him most affectionately through a severe illness, and with whom, to their great mutual enjoyment, he had taken a journey into Scotland,

The lakes and mountains of the north delighted him exceedingly. He beheld them with an epic eye. Afterwards, he went into the south, and luxuriated in the Isle of Wight. On Brown's leaving home a second time, to visit the same quarter, Keats, who was too ill to accompany him, came to reside with me, when his last and best volume of poems appeared, containing *Lamia*, *Isabella*, the *Eve of St Agnes*, and the noble fragment of *Hyperion*. I remember Lamb's delight and admiration on reading this book; how pleased he was with the designation of Mercury as 'the star of Lethe' (rising, as it were, and glittering as he came upon that pale region); and the fine daring anticipation in that passage of the second poem—

‘So the two brothers and *their murdered man*
Rode past fair Florence.’

So also the description, at once delicate and gorgeous, of Agnes praying beneath the painted window. The public are now well acquainted with those and other passages, for which Persian kings would have filled a poet's mouth with gold. I remember Keats reading to me with great relish and particularity, conscious of what he had set forth,

the lines describing the supper, and ending with the words,

‘Lucent syrops tinct with cinnamon.’

Mr Wordsworth would have said that the vowels were not varied enough ; but Keats knew where his vowels were *not* to be varied. On the occasion above alluded to, Wordsworth found fault with the repetition of the concluding sound of the participles in Shakespeare’s line about bees :—

‘The *singing* masons *building* roofs of gold.’

This, he said, was a line which Milton would never have written. Keats thought, on the other hand, that the repetition was in harmony with the continued note of the singers, and that Shakespeare’s negligence (if negligence it was) had instinctively felt the thing in the best manner. The assertion about Milton is startling, considering the tendency of that great poet to subject his nature to art ; yet I have dipped, while writing this, into *Paradise Lost*, and at the second chance have lit on the following :—

‘The gray

Dawn, and the Pleiades before him danced,
Shedding sweet influence. Less bright the moon,
But opposite, *in levelled west, was set*
His mirrour, with full force borrowing her light.’

The repetition of the *e* in the fourth line is an extreme case in point, being monotonous in order to express oneness and evenness.

Keats had felt that his disease was mortal, two or three years before he died. He had a constitutional tendency to consumption ; a close attendance on the deathbed of a beloved brother, when he ought to have been nursing himself in bed, gave it a blow which he felt for months. Despairing love (that is to say, despairing of living to enjoy it, for the love was returned) added its hourly torment ; and, meanwhile, the hostile critics came up, and roused an indignation in him, both against them and himself, which on so many accounts he could ill afford to endure.

When I was in Italy, Lord Byron showed me in manuscript the well-known passage in *Don Juan*, in which Keats' death is attributed to the *Quarterly Review* ; the couplet about the 'fiery particle,' that was 'snuffed out by an article.' I told him the real state of the case, proving to him that the supposition was a mistake, and therefore, if printed, would be a misrepresentation. But a stroke of wit was not to be given up.

At length Keats was persuaded by his friends to try the milder climate of Italy. He thought it better for others as well as

himself, that he should go. He was accompanied by Mr Severn, then a young artist of a promise equal to his subsequent repute, who possessed all that could recommend him for a companion—old acquaintanceship, great animal spirits, active tenderness, and a mind capable of appreciating that of the poet. They went first to Naples, and afterwards to Rome ; where on the 23rd of February, 1821, our author died in the arms of his friend, completely worn out, and longing for the release. He suffered so much in his lingering, that he used to watch the countenance of the physician for the favourable and fatal sentence, and express his regret when he found it delayed. Yet no impatience escaped him. He was manly and gentle to the last, and grateful for all services. A little before he died, he said that he ‘felt the daisies growing over him.’ But he made a still more touching remark respecting his epitaph. ‘If any,’ he said, ‘were put over him, he wished it to consist of nothing but these words : “Here lies one whose name was writ in water” :’—so little did he think of the more than promise he had given ;—of the fine and lasting things he had added to the stock of poetry ! The physicians expressed their astonishment that he had held out so long,

the lungs turning out, on inspection, to have been almost obliterated. They said he must have lived upon the mere strength of the spirit within him. He was interred in the English burying-ground at Rome, near the monument of Caius Cestius, where his great mourner, Shelley, was shortly to join him.

Keats, when he died, had just completed his four-and-twentieth year. He was under the middle height ; and his lower limbs were small in comparison with the upper, but neat and well rounded. His shoulders were very broad for his size : he had a face in which energy and sensibility were remarkably mixed up ; an eager power, checked and made patient by ill-health. Every feature was at once strongly cut, and delicately alive. If there was any faulty expression, it was in the mouth, which was not without something of a character of pugnacity. His face was rather long than otherwise ; the upper lip projected a little over the under ; the chin was bold, the cheeks sunken ; the eyes mellow and glowing ; large, dark, and sensitive. At the recital of a noble action, or a beautiful thought, they would suffuse with tears, and his mouth trembled. In this, there was ill-health as well as imagination, for he did

not like these betrayals of emotion ; and he had great personal as well as moral courage. He once chastised a butcher, who had been insolent, by a regular stand-up fight. His hair, of a brown colour, was fine, and hung in natural ringlets. The head was a puzzle for the phrenologists, being remarkably small in the skull ; a singularity which he had in common with Byron and Shelley, whose hats I could not get on. Keats was sensible of the disproportion above noticed, between his upper and lower extremities ; and he would look at his hand, which was faded and swollen in the veins, and say it was the hand of a man of fifty. He was a seven months' child. His mother, who was a lively woman, passionately fond of amusement, is supposed to have hastened her death by too great an inattention to hours and seasons. Perhaps she hastened that of her son. His father died of a fall from his horse in the year 1804.

I have endeavoured, in another publication,* to characterise the poetry of Keats, both in its merits and defects. It is not necessary to repeat them here. The public have made up their minds on the subject ; and such of his first opponents as were men of genius themselves, but suffered their

* *Imagination and Fancy*, p. 312.—[ED.]

perceptions to be obscured by political prejudice, (as who has not in such time?) have long agreed with, or anticipated the verdict. Sir Walter Scott confessed to Mr Severn at Rome, that the truth respecting Keats had prevailed; and it would have been strange, indeed, when the heat of the battle was over, had not Christopher North stretched out his large and warm hand to his memory. Times arrive, under the hallowing influences of thought and trouble, when genius is as sure to acknowledge genius, as it is to feel its own wants, and to be willing to share its glory. A man's eyes, the manlier they are, perceive at last, that there is nothing nobler in them than their tears.

Charles Lamb had a head worthy of Aristotle, with as fine a heart as ever beat in human bosom, and limbs very fragile to sustain it. There was a caricature of him sold in the shops, which pretended to be a likeness. Procter went into the shop in a passion, and asked the man what he meant by putting forth such a libel. The man apologised, and said that the artist meant no offence. There never was a true portrait of Lamb. His features were strongly yet delicately cut: he had a fine eye as well as forehead; and no face carried

in it greater marks of thought and feeling. It resembled that of Bacon, with less worldly vigour and more sensibility.

As his frame, so was his genius. It was as fit for thought as could be, and equally as unfit for action ; and this rendered him melancholy, apprehensive, humourous, and willing to make the best of everything as it was, both from tenderness of heart and abhorrence of alteration. His understanding was too great to admit an absurdity ; his frame was not strong enough to deliver it from a fear. His sensibility to strong contrasts was the foundation of his humour, which was that of a wit at once melancholy and willing to be pleased. He would beard a superstition, and shudder at the old phantasm while he did it. One could have imagined him cracking a jest in the teeth of a ghost, and then melting into thin air himself, out of sympathy with the awful. His humour and his knowledge both, were those of Hamlet, of Molière, of Carlin, who shook a city with laughter, and, in order to divert his melancholy, was recommended to go and hear himself. Yet he extracted a real pleasure out of his jokes, because good-heartedness retains that privilege when it fails in everything else. I should say he

condescended to be a punster, if condescension had been a word befitting wisdom like his. Being told that somebody had lampooned him, he said, 'Very well, I'll Lamb-pun him.' His puns were admirable, and often contained as deep things as the wisdom of some who have greater names ; such a man, for instance, as Nicole, the Frenchman, who was a baby to him. Lamb would have cracked a score of jokes at Nicole worth his whole book of sentences ; pelted his head with pearls. Nicole would not have understood him, but Rochefoucault would, and Pascal too ; and some of our old Englishmen would have understood him still better. He would have been worthy of hearing Shakespeare read one of his scenes to him, hot from the brain. Commonplace found a great comforter in him, as long as it was good-natured ; it was to the ill-natured or the dictatorial only that he was startling. Willing to see society go on as it did, because he despaired of seeing it otherwise, but not at all agreeing in his interior with the common notions of crime and punishment, he '*dumbfounded*' a long tirade against vice one evening, by taking the pipe out of his mouth, and asking the speaker, 'Whether he meant to say that a

thief was not a good man ?' To a person abusing Voltaire, and indiscreetly opposing his character to that of Jesus Christ, he said admirably well (though he by no means overrated Voltaire, nor wanted reverence in the other quarter), that 'Voltaire was a very good Jesus Christ *for the French.*' He liked to see the church-goers continue to go to church, and wrote a tale in his sister's admirable little book (*Mrs Leicester's School*) to encourage the rising generation to do so ; but to a conscientious deist he had nothing to object ; and if an atheist had found every door shut against him, he would assuredly not have found his. I believe he would have had the world remain precisely as it was, provided it innovated no farther ; but this spirit in him was anything but a worldly one, or for his own interest. He hardly contemplated with patience the new buildings in the Regent's Park : and, privately speaking, he had a grudge against *official* heaven-expounders, or clergymen. He would rather, however, have been with a crowd that he disliked, than felt himself alone. He said to me one day, with a face of great solemnity, 'What must have been that man's feelings, who thought himself *the first deist* ?' Finding no footing in certainty, he delighted

to confound the borders of theoretical truth and falsehood. He was fond of telling wild stories to children, engrafted on things about them ; wrote letters to people abroad, telling them that a friend of theirs [Mr Alsager, the commercial editor of the *Times*] had come out in genteel comedy ; and persuaded George Dyer that *Lord Castlereagh* was the author of *Waverley* ! The same excellent person walking one evening out of his friend's house into the New River, Lamb (who was from home at the time) wrote a paper under his signature of Elia, stating, that common friends would have stood dallying on the bank, have sent for neighbours, etc., but that *he*, in his magnanimity, jumped in, and rescued his friend after the old noble fashion. He wrote in the same magazine two lives of Liston and Munden, which the public took for serious, and which exhibit an extraordinary jumble of imaginary facts and truth of byepainting. Munden he made born at 'Stoke Pogis' : the very sound of which was like the actor speaking and digging his words. He knew how many false conclusions and pretensions are made by men who profess to be guided by facts only, as if facts could be misconceived, or figments taken for them ; and therefore, one day, when somebody was

speaking of a person who valued himself on being a matter-of-fact man, 'Now,' said he, 'I value myself on being a matter-of-lie man.' This did not hinder his being a man of the greatest veracity, in the ordinary sense of the word; but 'truth,' he said, 'was precious, and not to be wasted on everybody.' Those who wish to have a genuine taste of him, and an insight into his modes of life, should read his essays on *Hogarth* and *King Lear*, his *Letters*, his article on the *London Streets*, on *Whist-Playing*, which he loves, and on *Saying Grace before Meat*, which he thinks a strange moment to *select* for being grateful. He said once to a brother whist-player, whose hand was more clever than clean, and who had enough in him to afford the joke, 'M., if dirt were trumps, what hands you would hold.' [Another anecdote of Lamb his friend would relate with great gusto. While Leigh Hunt was living at Highgate, he used sometimes to be visited by his old school-fellow; and Coleridge, who, it will be remembered was Lamb's contemporary at Christ's Hospital, would sometimes supervene, and join for a short space in the walk and the conversation, the talk being, as usual, chiefly appropriated by himself. One day the soliloquy thus poured

into the ears of the two friends turned upon the blessings of faith, and it was both in tone and phraseology marked by the accepted dialect of the most 'regenerated' orthodoxy : in short, what uncourteous or invidious persons might call canting. After the illustrious poet had taken his leave, Leigh Hunt exclaimed, in a tone of perplexed vexation, 'What makes Coleridge talk in that way about heavenly grace, and the holy church, and that sort of thing?' 'Ah,' replied Lamb, with the hearty tone of a man uttering an obvious truism, but struggling with his habitual stammer, 'there is a g-g-reat deal of fun in Coleridge !'] *

SHELLEY'S END

[From the *Autobiography*, 1850]

LEGHORN is a polite Wapping, with a square and a theatre. The country around is uninteresting when you become acquainted with it ; but to a stranger the realisation of anything he has read about is a delight, especially of such things as vines hanging from trees, and the sight of Apennines. It

* The portion in brackets is one of the additions of Leigh Hunt's son to his father's work.—[Ed.].

is pleasant, too, to a lover of books, when at Leghorn, to think that Smollett once lived there ; not, indeed, happily, for he was very ill, and besides living there, died there. But genius gives so much pleasure (and must also have received so much in the course of its life) that the memory of its troubles is overcome by its renown. Smollett once lived, as Lord Byron did, at Monte Nero ; and he was buried in the Leghorn cemetery.

Mr Shelley accompanied us from Leghorn to Pisa, in order to see us fixed in our new abode. Lord Byron left Monte Nero at the same time, and joined us. We occupied the ground-floor of his lordship's house, the Casa Lanfranchi, on the river Arno, which runs through the city. Divided tenancies of this kind are common in Italy, where few houses are in possession of one family. The families in this instance, as in others, remained distinct. The ladies at the respective heads of them never exchanged even a word. It was set to the account of their want of acquaintance with their respective languages ; and the arrangement, I believe, which in every respect thus tacitly took place, was really, for many reasonable considerations, objected to by nobody.

The Casa Lanfranchi, which had been the mansion of the great Pisan family whose ancestors figure in Dante, is said to have been built by Michael Angelo, and is worthy of him. It is in a bold and broad style throughout, with those harmonious graces of proportion which are sure to be found in an Italian mansion. The outside is of rough marble.

We had not been in the house above an hour or two, when my friend brought the celebrated surgeon, Vaccà, to see Mrs Hunt. He had a pleasing, intelligent face, and was the most gentlemanlike Italian I ever saw. Vaccà pronounced his patient to be in a decline; and little hope was given us by others that she would survive beyond the year. She lived till the year 1857, and Vaccà had been dead many years before. I do not say this to his disparagement, for he was very skilful, and deserved his celebrity. But it appears to me, from more than one remarkable instance, that there is a superstition about what are called declines and consumptions, from which the most eminent of the profession are not free. I suspect, indeed I may say I know, that many people of this tendency, or at least supposed to be of it, may reach, with a proper mode of

living, to as good a period of existence as most others. The great secret in this as in all other cases, and, indeed, in almost all moral as well as physical cases of ill, seems to be in diet and regimen. If some demigod could regulate for mankind what they should eat and drink, and by what bodily treatment circulate their blood, he would put an end to half the trouble which the world undergo, some of the most romantic sorrows with which they flatter themselves not excepted. The case, however, in the present instance was perhaps peculiar, and may not before have been witnessed by Vaccà. The expectoration, at all events, of blood itself, and this too sometimes in alarming quantities, and never entirely without recurrence, lasted throughout a life of no ordinary duration.

The next day, while in the drawing-room with Lord Byron, I had a curious specimen of Italian manners. It was like a scene in an opera. One of his servants, a young man, suddenly came in smiling, and was followed by his sister, a handsome brunette, in a bodice and sleeves, and her hair uncovered. She advanced to his lordship to welcome him back to Pisa, and present him a basket of flowers. In doing this, she took his hand

and kissed it ; then turned to the stranger and kissed his hand also. I thought we ought to have struck up a quartett.

It is the custom of Italy, as it used to be in England, for inferiors to kiss your hand in coming and going. There is an air of good-will in it that is very agreeable, though the implied sense of inferiority is hardly so pleasant. Servants have a custom also of wishing you a 'happy evening' (*felice sera*) when they bring in lights. To this you may respond in like manner ; after which it seems impossible for the sun to 'go down on the wrath,' if there is any, of either party.

In a day or two Shelley took leave of us to return to Lerici for the rest of the season, meaning, however, to see us more than once in the interval. I spent one delightful afternoon with him, wandering about Pisa, and visiting the cathedral. On the night of the same day he took a post-chaise for Leghorn, intending next morning to depart with his friend Captain Williams for Lerici. I entreated him, if the weather were violent, not to give way to his daring spirit and venture to sea. He promised me he would not ; and it seems that he did set off later than he otherwise would have done,

apparently at a more favourable moment.* I never beheld him more.

The same night there was a tremendous storm of thunder and lightning, which made us very anxious ; but we hoped our friend had arrived before then. When some days later, Trelawny came to Pisa, and told us he was missing, I underwent one of the sensations which we read of in books, but seldom experience : I was tongue-tied with horror.

A dreadful interval took place of more than a week, during which, every inquiry and fond hope were exhausted. At the end of that period our worst fears were confirmed. A body had been washed on shore, near the town of Via Reggio, which, by the dress and stature, was known to be our friend's. Keats' last volume also (the *Lamia*, etc.), was found open in the jacket pocket. He had probably been reading it when surprised by the storm. It was my copy. I had told him to keep it till he gave it me with his own hands. So I would not have it from any other. It was burnt with his remains. The body of his friend Mr Williams was found near a tower,

* This is a mistake. Shelley set off *earlier* than he intended, his departure being hastened by a desponding note which he received from his wife.—[THORNTON HUNT's *Note*.]

four miles distant from its companion. That of the third party in a boat, Charles Vivian the seaman, was not discovered till nearly three weeks afterwards.*

The remains of Shelley and Mr Williams were burnt after the good ancient fashion, and gathered into coffers [those of Williams on the 15th of August, of Shelley on the 16th]. Those of Mr Williams were subsequently taken to England. Shelley's were interred at Rome, in the Protestant burial-ground, the place which he had so touchingly described in recording its reception of Keats. The ceremony of the burning was alike beautiful and distressing. Trelawny, who had been the chief person concerned in ascertaining the fate of his friends, com-

* A story was current in Leghorn which conjecturally helped to explain the shipwreck of Shelley's boat. It went out to sea in rough weather, and *yet* was followed by a native boat. When Shelley's yacht was raised, a large hole was found stove in the stern. Shelley had on board a sum of money in dollars; and the supposition is, that the men in the other boat had tried to board Shelley's piratically, but had desisted because the collision caused the English boat to sink; and they abandoned it because the men saved would have become their accusers. The only facts in support of this conjectural story are the alleged following of the native boat, and the damage to the stern of Shelley's boat, otherwise not very accountable.—[T. HUNT's *Notc.*]

pleted his kindness by taking the most active part on this last mournful occasion. He and his friend Captain Shenley were first upon the ground, attended by proper assistants. Lord Byron and myself arrived shortly afterwards. His lordship got out of his carriage, but wandered away from the spectacle, and did not see it. I remained inside the carriage, now looking on, now drawing back with feelings that were not to be witnessed.

None of the mourners, however, refused themselves the little comfort of supposing, that lovers of books and antiquity, like Shelley and his companion, Shelley in particular with his Greek enthusiasm, would not have been sorry to foresee this part of their fate. The mortal part of him, too, was saved from corruption; not the least extraordinary part of his history. Among the materials for burning, as many of the gracefuller and more classical articles as could be procured—frankincense, wine, etc.—were not forgotten; and to these Keats's volume was added. The beauty of the flame arising from the funeral pile was extraordinary. The weather was beautifully fine. The Mediterranean, now soft and lucid, kissed the shore as if to make peace with it.

The yellow sand and blue sky were intensely contrasted with one another : marble mountains touched the air with coolness ; and the flame of the fire bore away towards heaven in vigorous amplitude, waving and quivering with a brightness of inconceivable beauty. It seemed as though it contained the glassy essence of vitality. You might have expected a seraphic countenance to look out of it, turning once more before it departed, to thank the friends that had done their duty.*

Yet, see how extremes can appear to meet even on occasions the most overwhelming ; nay, even by reason of them ; for as cold can perform the effect of fire, and burn us, so can despair put on the monstrous aspect of mirth. On returning from one of our visits to this sea-shore, we dined and drank ; I mean, Lord Byron and myself ;—dined little, and drank too much. Lord Byron had not shone that day, even in his cups, which usually brought out his best qualities. As to myself, I had bordered upon emotions which I have never suffered myself to indulge, and which, foolishly as well as impatiently, render calamity, as somebody termed it, ‘an affront, and not a misfortune.’

* Compare Trelawny's *Recollections* and Byron's *Letters* with this account.—[ED.]

The barouche drove rapidly though the forest of Pisa. We sang, we laughed, we shouted. I even felt a gaiety the more shocking, because it was real and a relief. What the coachman thought of us, God knows ; but he helped to make up a ghastly trio. He was a good-tempered fellow, and an affectionate husband and father ; yet he had the reputation of having offered his master to kill a man. I wish to have no such waking dream again. It was worthy of a German ballad.

Shelley, when he died, was in his thirtieth year. His figure was tall and slight, and his constitution consumptive. He was subject to violent spasmodic pains, which would sometimes force him to lie on the ground till they were over ; but he had always a kind word to give to those about him, when his pangs allowed him to speak. In this organisation, as well as in some other respects, he resembled the German poet Schiller. Though well turned, his shoulders were bent a little owing to premature thought and trouble. The same causes had touched his hair with gray ; and though his habits of temperance and exercise gave him a remarkable degree of strength, it is not supposed that he could have lived

many years. He used to say that he had lived three times as long as the calendar gave out ; which he would prove, between jest and earnest, by some remarks on Time,

‘That would have puzzled that stout Stagyrите.’

Like the Stagyrите’s, his voice was high and weak. His eyes were large and animated, with a dash of wildness in them ; his face small, but well shaped, particularly the mouth and chin, the turn of which was very sensitive and graceful. His complexion was naturally fair and delicate, with a colour in the cheeks. He had brown hair, which, though tinged with gray, surmounted his face well, being in considerable quantity, and tending to a curl. His side-face, upon the whole, was deficient in strength, and his features would not have told well in a bust ; but when fronting and looking at you attentively his aspect had a certain seraphical character that would have suited a portrait of John the Baptist, or the angel whom Milton describes as holding a reed ‘tip with fire.’ Nor would the most religious mind, had it known him, have objected to the comparison ; for, with all his scepticism, Shelley’s disposition was truly said to have

been anything but irreligious. A person of much eminence for piety in our times has well observed, that the greatest want of religious feeling is not to be found among the greatest infidels, but among those who never think of religion except as a matter of course. The leading feature of Shelley's character may be said to have been a natural piety. He was pious towards nature, towards his friends, towards the whole human race, towards the meanest insect of the forest. He did himself an injustice with the public in using the popular name of the Supreme Being inconsiderately. He identified it solely with the most vulgar and tyrannical notions of a God made after the worst human fashion ; and did not sufficiently reflect that it was often used by a juster devotion to express a sense of the great Mover of the universe. An impatience in contradicting worldly and pernicious notions of a supernatural power led his own aspirations to be misconstrued ; for though, in the severity of his dialectics, and particularly in moments of despondency, he sometimes appeared to be hopeless of what he most desired—and though he justly thought that a Divine Being would prefer the increase of benevolence and good before any praise, or even

recognition of himself (a reflection worth thinking of by the intolerant), yet there was in reality no belief to which he clung with more fondness than that of some great pervading 'Spirit of Intellectual Beauty'; as may be seen in his aspirations on that subject. He assented warmly to an opinion which I expressed in the cathedral at Pisa, while the organ was playing, that a truly divine religion might yet be established if charity were really made the principle of it, instead of faith.

Music affected him deeply. He had also a delicate perception of the beauties of sculpture. It is not one of the least evidences of his conscientious turn of mind that, with the inclination and the power to surround himself in Italy with all the graces of life, he made no sort of attempt that way; finding other uses for his money, and not always satisfied with himself for indulging even in the luxury of a boat. When he bought elegancies of any kind it was to give them away. Boating was his great amusement. He loved the mixture of action and repose which he found in it; and delighted to fancy himself gliding away to Utopian isles and bowers of enchantment. But he would give up any pleasure to do a deed

of kindness. Indeed, he may be said to have made the whole comfort of his life a sacrifice to what he thought the wants of society.

Temperament and early circumstances conspired to make him a reformer, at a time of life when few begin to think for themselves ; and it was his misfortune, as far as immediate reputation was concerned, that he was thrown upon society with a precipitancy and vehemence which rather startled others with fear for themselves, than allowed them to become sensible of the love and zeal that impelled him. He was like a spirit that had darted out of its orb, and found itself in another world. I used to tell him that he had come from the planet Mercury. When I heard of the catastrophe that overtook him, it seemed as if this spirit, not sufficiently constituted like the rest of the world to obtain their sympathy, yet gifted with a double portion of love for all living things, had been found dead in a solitary corner of the earth, its wings stiffened, its warm heart cold ; the relics of a misunderstood nature, slain by the ungenial elements.

THE LIBERAL AND LORD BYRON

[From the *Autobiography*, 1850]

THE Genoese post brought us the first number of our new quarterly, the *Liberal*, accompanied both with hopes and fears, the latter of which were too speedily realised. Living now in a separate house from Lord Byron, I saw less of him than before ; and, under all the circumstances, it was as well : for though we had always been on what are called 'good terms,' the cordiality did not increase. His friends in England, who, after what had taken place there in his instance, were opposed, naturally enough, to his opening new fields of publicity, did what they could to prevent his taking a hearty interest in the *Liberal* ; and I must confess that I did not mend the matter by my own inability to fall in cordially with his ways, and by a certain jealousy of my position, which prevented me, neither very wisely nor justly, from manifesting the admiration due to his genius, and reading the manuscripts he showed me with a becoming amount of thanks and good words. I think he had a right to feel this want of accord in a companion, whatever might be its value. A dozen years later, reflection

would have made me act very differently. At the same time, though the *Liberal* had no mean success, he unquestionably looked to its having a far greater ; and the result of all these combined circumstances was, that the interest he took in it cooled in proportion as it should have grown warm, and after four numbers it ceased. They were all published during our residence in this part of Italy. Lord Byron contributed some poems, to which his customary publisher had objected on account of their fault-finding in Church and State, and their critical attacks on acquaintances. Among them was the *Vision of Judgment*, the best satire since the days of Pope. Churchill's satires, compared with it, are bludgeons compared with steel of Damascus. Hazlitt contributed some of the most entertaining of his vigorous essays ; and Shelley had left us his masterly translation of the *May-Day Night* in *Faust*. As to myself, if I may speak of my own articles after these, I wrote by far the greater number, —perhaps nearly half the publication ; but I was ill ; and with the exception of one or two, I hope they were not among my best. This, however, did not hinder great puzzlement among the critics of that day. I say it with not the slightest intention of self-com-

pliment ; and I should think him a very dull fellow who supposed it.

Puzzlement and posement of various sorts awaited many readers of the *Liberal*. A periodical work which is understood to be written by known authors, whose names are, nevertheless, unaffixed to their contributions, has the disadvantage of hazarding uneasiness to the minds of such readers as pique themselves on knowing a man's style without really being sure of it. They long to assign the articles to this and that author, but they fear to be mistaken. The perplexity irritates them ; they are forced to wait the judgments of others ; and they willingly comfort the wound given to their self-love by siding with such as are unfavourable, and pronouncing the articles to be of an undistinguishable mediocrity. I do not know how far this kind of dilemma may have injured the *Liberal*. I suspect it had no little effect. But what must have exasperated, while it consoled it, critics of an opposite kind were sometimes as much in the wrong as the former were afraid of being. A signal instance occurred in the case of a writer not disesteemed in his day, whose name I suppress, because the mention of it might disconcert some relation. One of the poems

in the *Liberal* is entitled the *Book of Beginnings*. Its subject is poetical exordiums. The writer in question attributed it to Lord Byron ; and after denouncing the ‘atheists and scoffers,’ by whom, he said, his lordship had been ‘led into defiance of the sacred writings,’ thus proceeded to notice a religious passage from Dryden, which was quoted with admiration in the notes of the poem :—

‘In vain was Lord Byron led into the defiance of the sacred writings ; there are passages in his letters and in his works which show that religion might have been in his soul. Could he recite the following lines and resist the force of them ! It is true that he marks them for the beauty of the verse, but no less for the sublimity of the conception ; and I cannot but hope that, had he lived, he would have proved another instance of genius bowing to the power of truth.’

Now the poem in question, and the notes to it, were written by myself, one of those ‘atheists and scoffers’ (according to this gentleman), by whom the supposed writer of the poem had been ‘led into defiance of the sacred writings.’

This person knew as little of my religion as he knew of an author’s manner. Among these same notes of mine is the following passage :—

‘What divine plays would not Beaumont and Fletcher have left us, if they had not been fine gentlemen about

town, and ambitious to please a perishing generation ! Their muse is like an accomplished country beauty, of the most exquisite kind, seduced up to town, and made familiar with the most devilish parts of it, yet retaining, through all her debauchery, a sweet regret and an adoring fondness for nature. She has lilies about her paint and patch-boxes, and loves them almost as much as when she was a child.'

I do not think that the author of *Don Juan* was accustomed to make critical reflections of that sort. I do not allude, of course, to the writing, but to the sentiment. But the poem was written in the stanza of *Don Juan*, and, therefore, his Lordship was to be complimented with the religion of it, at the expense of his *Juanity*.

I will take this opportunity of recording some more anecdotes as they occur to me. My neighbour and myself used to walk in the grounds of the Casa Saluzzi ; talking for the most part of indifferent things, and endeavouring to joke away the consciousness of our position. We joked even upon our differences of opinion. It was a jest between us, that the only book that was a thorough favourite on both sides, was Boswell's *Life of Johnson*. I used to talk of Johnson when I saw him disturbed, or when I wished to avoid other subjects. He asked me one day how I should have felt in Johnson's

company. I said it was difficult to judge; because, living in other times, and one's character being modified by them, I could not help thinking of myself as I was now, and Johnson as he was in times previous: so that it appeared to me that I should have been somewhat 'Jacobinical' in his company, and not disposed to put up with his *ipse dixit*. He said that 'Johnson would have awed him, he treated lords with so much respect.' The reader, after what I have lately said, will see what was at the bottom of these remarks on both sides. Had the question been asked me now, I should have said, that I loved Johnson, and hope I should have shown him all due homage; though I think I should have been inclined sometimes to contest his conclusions more than they are contested by his interlocutors in Boswell. Lord Byron liked to imitate Johnson, and say, 'Why sir,' in a high mouthing way, rising, and looking about him. His imitation was very pleasant.

It is a credit to my noble friend, that he was by far the pleasantest when he had got a little wine in his head. The only time I invited myself to dine with him, I told him I did it on that account, and that I meant to push the bottle so that he should intoxicate

me with his good company. He said he would have a set-to ; but he never did. It was a little before he left Italy ; and there was a point in contest between us (not regarding myself) which he thought perhaps I should persuade him to give up. When in his cups, which was not often nor immoderately, he was inclined to be tender ; but not weakly so, nor lachrymose. I know not how it might have been with everybody, but he paid me the compliment of being excited to his very best feelings ; and when I rose late to go away, he would hold me down, and say with a look of entreaty, ‘Not yet.’ Then it was that I seemed to talk with the proper natural Byron as he ought to have been ; and I used to think there was not a sacrifice which I could not have made to keep him in that temper, and see his friends love him as much as the world admired. But I ought to have made the sacrifice at once. I should have broken the ice between us which had been generated on points of literary predilection ; and admired, and shown that I admired, as I ought to have done, his admirable genius. It was not only an oversight in me ; it was a want of friendship. Friendship ought to have made me discover what less cordial feelings had kept me blind

to. Next morning the happy moment had gone, and nothing remained but to despair and joke.

In his wine he would volunteer an imitation of somebody, generally of Incledon. He was not a good mimic in the detail, but he could give a lively broad sketch ; and over his cups his imitations were good-natured, which was not always the case at other times. His Incledon was vocal. I made pretensions to the oratorical part ; and between us we boasted that we made up the entire phenomenon. He would sometimes, however, give a happy comprehensive idea of a person's manner and turn of mind by the utterance of a single phrase, or even word. Thus he would pleasantly pretend that Braham called 'enthusiasm' *entoozy-moozy* ; and in the extraordinary combination of lightness, haste, indifference, and fervour with which he would pitch out that single word from his lips, accompanied with a gesture to correspond, he would really set before you the admirable singer in one of his (then) characteristic passages of stage dialogue. He did not live to see Braham become an exception in his dialogue as in his singing.

Lord Byron left Italy for Greece, and our conversation was at an end.

SHORTER EXTRACTS

AETNA

[From *A Jar of Honey from Mount Hybla*, 1848]

[THIS book is a retrospect, not quite serious, yet not quite committed to frivolity, of the history, biography and legends of Sicily. The names with which the island is associated inspire, as they appear, Hunt's fancy and learning to a wealth of beautiful pictures, images, conceits, and bits of out of the way knowledge. Theocritus and the pastoral poetry of the Pan-Hellenic period lead the author naturally enough to that English poet, whose name was so often on his lips, and from Spenser, Hunt turns to Ben Jonson, Fletcher, Burns, and Allan Ramsay. In addition to the description of matters more intimately connected with Sicily and its surrounding seas, the book contains much of Hunt's shrewd criticism upon writers like Cervantes, Boccaccio, and Chaucer.

A Jar of Honey was the fruit of the most tranquil period of its author's life. It was written after he had received his Civil List pension and the annuity

from the Shelley family. The greater ease and security of his life at the time are reflected in the flowing pages of the work. It made its first appearance in periodical form, as a contribution to *Ainsworth's Magazine*, 1844.]

DID Aetna exist before the human race? Was it for ages, a great lonely monster, sitting by the sea with his rugged woody shoulders, and ghastly crown; now silent and quiet for centuries, like a basking giant; now roaring to the antedeluvian skies; vomiting forth fire and smoke; drivelling with lava; then silent as before; alternately destroying and nourishing the transitory races of analogous gigantic creatures, mammoths and mastodons, which preceded nobler humanity? Was it produced all at once by some tremendous burst of earth and ocean? some convulsion, of which the like has never since been known—perhaps with all Sicily hanging at its root; or did it grow, like other earthly productions, by its own energies and the accumulations of time? In whatever way it originated, and however the huge wonder may have behaved itself at any period, quietly or tremendously, nobody can doubt, that the creature is a benevolent creature, one of the securities of the peaceful and profitable exist-

ence of the far greater and more mysterious creature rolling in the shape of an orb round the sun in the midst of its countless like, and carrying us all along with it in our respective busy inattentions. We do not presume to inquire how the necessity for any such evil mode of good sense arose. Suffice for us, that the evil itself works to a good purpose ; that the earth, apparently, could not exist without it ; that Nature has adorned it with beauty, which is another good, with fertility, which is another ; with grandeur which is another, elevating the mind ; and that if human beings prefer risking its neighbourhood, with all its occasional calamities, to going and living elsewhere, those calamities are not of its own willing, nor of any unavoidable necessity, nor, perhaps, will exist always. Suppose Aetna should some day again be left to its solitude, and people resolve to be burnt and buried alive no longer ? What a pilgrimage would the mountain be then ! What a thought for the poet and the philosopher ! What a visit for those who delight in the borders of fear and terror, and who would love to interrogate Nature the more for the loneliness of her sanctuary.

THE SIRENS

[From *A Jar of Honey from Mount Hybla*]

WHEN the writer of the present book was in Italy, he saw on a mantle-piece a card inscribed, *Le Marquis de Reuse*. This was the Frenchified denomination of a Sicilian nobleman, who, strangely combining Greek and Gothic in his title, was no less a personage than the *Marquis of Arethusa* ! He was the proprietor of the spot where the fountain exists under its old name, though, according to travellers, deplorably altered ; for it has become, says one of them, the public ‘wash-tub !’ It is the Syracusan laundry. Divers, he informs us, are the jokes cracked on the ‘nymphs’ that now attend it. Some critics are of the opinion, that such were the only nymphs that ever existed ; and they are very merry over the fallen condition of the once exquisite Arethusa. Poor devils ! taking pains to vulgarise their perceptions, and diminish the amount of grace and joy. As if Arethusa, like themselves, were at the mercy of a homely association ; or all that had been written about her was no better than their own account with the laundress.

They flatter themselves. They leave her

just where she was—everywhere and immortal. It may not be very pleasant to look for a poetic fountain and to find a laundry ; but the imagination is a poor one indeed which is to be overwhelmed by it. The nymphs of minds like these could never have been very different from laundresses, if truth were known, or at the utmost, of a little higher stock than such as laundresses and milliners are the making of.

There are two things, we confess, about the Sirens, that perplex us. In the first place, we never found anything particularly attractive in the songs attributed to them, not even by Homer, and secondly, we are too much in the secret of their deformity. We know that they were ghastly monsters, bird-harpies with women's heads, and surrounded with human bones ; and the consequence is that we can never find them in the least degree enticing. It is to no purpose that they combine stringed with wind instruments, and a voice crowning all. One of them may call herself *Fair Goddess* (Leucothea), and another *Fine Voice* (Ligeia), and the third *Maiden Face* (Parthenope). We know all about them, and are not to be taken in. It would require a dream as horrible as Coleridge's *Pains of Sleep* to bring

our antipathy into any communication with them—to make us walk in our sleep towards their quarter :—

Desire with loathing strangely mix'd,
On wild and hateful objects fix'd ;
Fantastic passions, maddening brawl,
And shame and terror over all.

When the modern poets turned the Sirens into Mermaids, they vastly improved the breed. A woman, we grant, who is half a fish, is not a desideratum ; but she is better than a great human-faced bird hopping about ; and besides the conformation of the creatures being thus altered, we are not so sure they will do us harm, especially as the poets treat them with comparative respect, sometimes even with tenderness.

The names above-mentioned acquire a double elegance in the adjurations of the Spirit in *Comus* :—

By Thetis' tinsel-slipper'd feet,
And the songs of Sirens sweet,
By dead Parthenope's dear tomb,
And dead Ligeia's golden comb,
Wherewith she sits on diamond rocks
Sleeking her soft alluring locks.

Those alluring locks come home to us. We have seen such at our elbows, and can hear the comb passing through them.

OF THE SIGHT OF SHOPS

[From the *Indicator*, 1834. The following extracts are taken from the longer essay which appeared in two parts on subsequent dates in the above paper. Leigh Hunt subjects the panorama of the ordinary day to his light quizzing raillery and good-tempered fantasy.]

WE remember, in our boyhood, a lady from the West Indies, of a very delicate and high-bred nature, who could find nothing about our streets that more excited her admiration than the butchers' shops. She had no notion from what she had seen in her own country, that so ugly a business could be carried on with so much neatness, and become actually passable. An open potato-shop is a dull, bleak-looking place, except in the height of summer. A cheesemonger's is then at its height of annoyance, unless you see a paviour or bricklayer coming out with his three penn'orth on his bread—a better sight than the glutton's waddling away from the fishmonger's. A poulterer's is a dead-bodied business, with its birds and their lax necks. We dislike to see a bird anywhere but in the open air, alive and quick. Of all creatures, restraint and death become its winged vivacity the least. For the same reason we hate aviaries. Dog-shops are tolerable. A cook-

shop does not mingle the agreeable with the useful. We hate its panes, with *Ham and Beef* scratched upon them in white letters. An ivory-turner's is pleasant, with its red and white chessmen, and little big-headed Indians on elephants ; so is a toy-shop, with its endless delights for children. A coach-maker's is not disagreeable, if you can see the painting and panels. An umbrella-shop only reminds one of a rainy day, unless it is a shop for sticks also, which, as we have already shown are meritorious articles. The curiosity-shop is sometimes very amusing, with its mandarins, stuffed birds, odd old carved faces, and a variety of things as indescribable as bits of dreams. The green-grocer carries his recommendation in his epithet. The hairdressers are also interesting as far as their hair goes, but not as their heads—we mean the heads in their windows. One of the shops we like least is an angling repository, with its rod for a sign, and a fish dancing in the agonies of death at the end of it. We really cannot see what equanimity there is in jerking a lacerated carp out of the water by the jaws, merely because it has not the power of making a noise ; for we presume that the most philosophic of anglers would hardly delight in catching shrieking fish.

An optician's is not very amusing, unless it has those reflecting-glasses in which you see your face run off on each side into attenuated width, or upwards and downwards in the same manner, in dreary longitude. A saddler's is good, because it reminds one of horses. A Christian swordmaker's or gunmaker's is edifying. A glass-shop is a beautiful spectacle ; it reminds one of the splendours of a fairy palace. We like a blacksmith's for the sturdy looks and thumpings of the men, the swarthy colour, the fiery sparkles and the thunder-breathing throat of the furnace. Of other houses of traffic, not common in the streets, there is something striking to us in the large, well-conditioned horses of the brewers, and the rich smoke rolling from out their chimneys. We also greatly admire a wharf, with its boats, barrels, and packages, and the fresh air from the water, not to mention the smell of pitch. It carries us at once a hundred miles over the water. For similar reasons, the crabbedest old lane has its merits in our eyes, if there is a sailmaker's in it, or a boatbuilder's, and water at the end.

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In the general glance that we have taken at shops, we have been unwillingly com-

pelled to pass some of them too generally. It is the object, therefore, of the present article to enter into those more attractive thresholds, and look a little about us. We imagine a fine day ; time, about noon ; scene, any good brilliant street. The ladies are abroad in white and green ; the beaux lounging, conscious of their waists and neck-cloths ; the busy pushing onward, conscious of their bills.

To begin, then, where our shopping experience began, with the toy-shop—

Visions of glory, spare our aching sight !
Ye just-breech'd ages, crowd not on our soul !

We still seem to have a lively sense of the smell of that gorgeous red paint which was on the handle of our first wooden sword ! The pewter guard also—how beautifully fretted and like silver did it look ! How did we hang it round our shoulder by the proud belt of an old ribbon ;—then feel it well suspended ; then draw it out of the sheath, eager to cut down four savage men for ill-using ditto of damsels ! An old muff made an excellent grenadier's cap ; or one's hat and feather, with the assistance of three surreptitious large pins, became fiercely modern and military. There it is, in that

corner of the window—the same identical sword to all appearance, which kept us awake the first night behind our pillow. We still feel ourselves little boys while standing in this shop ; and for that matter, so we do on other occasions. A field has as much merit in our eyes, and ginger-bread almost as much in our mouths, as at that daisy-plucking and cake-eating period of life. There is the trigger-rattling gun, fine of its kind, but not so complete a thing as the sword. Its memories are not so ancient : for Alexander or St George did not fight with a musket. Neither is it so true a thing ; it is not like life. The trigger is too much like that of a cross-bow ; and the pea which it shoots, however hard, produces, even to the imaginative faculties of boyhood, a humiliating flash of the mock-heroic. It is difficult to fancy a dragon killed with a pea : but the shape and appurtenances of the sword being genuine, the whole sentiment of massacre is as much in its wooden blade as if it were steel of Damascus. The drum is still more real, though not so heroic.—In the corner opposite are battledores and shuttle-cocks, which have their maturer beauties ; balls which possess the additional zest of the danger of breaking people's

windows ;—ropes, good for swinging and skipping, especially the long ones which others turn for you, while you run in a masterly manner up and down, or skip in one spot with an easy and endless exactitude of toe, looking alternately at their conscious faces ; blood-allies, with which the possessor of a crisp finger and thumb-knuckle causes the smitten marbles to vanish out of the ring ; kites, which must appear to more vital birds a ghastly kind of fowl, with their grim, long, white faces, no bodies, and endless tails ; cricket-bats, manly to handle ;—trap-bats, a genteel inferiority ;—swimming-corks, despicable ;—horses on wheels, an imposition on the infant public ;—rocking-horses, too much like Pegasus, ardent yet never getting on ;—Dutch toys, so like life, that they ought to be better ;—Jacob's ladders, flapping down one over another their tintinnabulary shutters ;—dissected maps, from which the infant statesman may learn how to dovetail provinces and kingdoms ;—paper posture-makers, who hitch up their knees against their shoulder-blades, and dangle their legs like an opera dancer ;—Lilliputian plates, dishes and other household utensils, in which a grand dinner is served up out of half an apple ;—boxes

of paints, to colour engravings with, always beyond the outline ;—ditto of bricks, a very sensible and lasting toy, which we except from a grudge we have against the gravity of infant geometricks ;—whips, very useful for cutting people's eyes unawares ;—hoops, one of the most ancient as well as excellent of toys ;—sheets of pictures, from A apple-pie up to farming, military, and zoological exhibitions, always taking care that the Fly is as large as the Elephant, and the letter X exclusively appropriated to Xerxes ;—musical deal-boxes, rather complaining than sweet, and more like a peal of bodkins than bells ;—penny trumpets, awful at Barthlemy-tide ;—jews' harps, that thrill and breathe between the lips like a metal tongue ;—carts—carriages—hobby-horses, upon which the infant equestrian prances about proudly on his own feet ;—in short, not to go through the whole representative body of existence—dolls, which are so dear to the maternal instincts of little girls. We protest, however, against that abuse of them, which makes them full-dressed young ladies in body, while they remain infant in face ; especially when they are of frail wax. It is cultivating finery instead of affection. We prefer good, honest, plump limbs of

cotton and sawdust, dressed in baby-linen ; or even our ancient young friends, with their staring dotted eyes, red varnished faces, triangular noses, and Rosinante wooden limbs—not, it must be confessed, excessively shapely or feminine, but the reverse of fragile beauty, and prepared against all disasters.

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There are two more excellent shops we must not omit—the fruiterer's and the sculptor's. There is great beauty as well as agreeableness in a well-disposed fruiterer's window. Here are the round piled-up oranges, deepening almost into red, and heavy with juice ; the apple, with its brown red cheek, as if it had slept in the sun ; the pear, swelling downwards ; thronging grapes, like so many tight little bags of wine ; the peach, whose handsome leathern coat strips off so finely ; the pearly or ruby-like currants, heaped in light long baskets ; the red little mouthful of strawberries ; the larger purple ones of plums ; cherries, whose old comparison with lips is better than anything new ; mulberries, dark and rich with juice, fit to grow over what Homer calls the deep black-watered fountains ; the swelling pomp

of melons ; the rough inexorable-looking
cocoa-nut, milky at heart ; the elaborate
elegance of walnuts ; the quaint cashoo-nut ;
almonds, figs, raisins, tamarinds, green leaves,
—in short,

Whatever Earth, all-bearing mother, yields
In India East or West, or middle shore
In Pontus or the Punick coast, or where
Alcinous reigned, fruit of all kinds, in coat
Rough, or smooth rind, or bearded husk, or shell.
—MILTON.

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In the windows of some of the sculptors' shops, artificial fruit may be seen. It is a better thing to put up on a mantelpiece than many articles of greater fashion ; but it gives an abominable sensation to one's imaginary teeth. The incautious epicure who plunges his teeth into 'a painted snowball' in Italy can hardly receive so jarring a balk to his gums as the bare apprehension of a bite at a stone peach ; but the farther you go in a sculptor's shop the better. Many persons are not aware that there are show-rooms in these places, which are well worth getting a sight of by some small purchase. For the best plaster-casts the Italian shops, such as Papera's in Marylebone Street, Golden

Square, and Sarti's in Greek Street, are the best. Of all the shop-pleasures that are 'not inelegant,' an hour or two passed in a place of this kind is surely one of the most polite. Here are the gods and heroes of old, and the more beneficent philosophers, ancient and modern. You are looked upon, as you walk among them, by the paternal majesty of Jupiter, the force and decision of Minerva, the still more arresting gentleness of Venus, the budding compactness of Hebe, the breathing inspiration of Apollo. Here the celestial Venus, naked in heart and body, ties up her locks, her drapery hanging upon her lower limbs. Here the Belvidere Apollo, breathing forth his triumphant disdain, follows with an earnest eye the shaft that has killed the serpent. Here the Graces, linked in an affectionate group, meet you in the naked sincerity of their innocence and generosity, their hands 'open as day,' and two advancing for one receding. Here Hercules, like the building of a man, looks down from his propping club, as if half disdaining even that repose. There Mercury, with his light limbs, seems just to touch the ground, ready to give a start with his foot and be off again. Bacchus, with his riper cheek, and his thicker hanging locks, appears to be eyeing one of

his nymphs. The Vatican Apollo near him leans upon the stump of a tree, the hand which hangs upon it holding a bit of his lyre, the other arm thrown up over his head, as if he felt the air upon his body, and heard it singing through the strings. In a corner on another side is the crouching Venus of John of Bologna, shrinking just before she steps into the bath. The Dancing Faun is not far off, with his animal spirits, and the Piping Faun, sedater because he possesses an art more accomplished. Among the other divinities, we look up with veneration to old Homer's head, resembling an earthly Jupiter. Plato beholds us with a bland dignity—a beauty unimpairable by years. How different from the brute impulse of Mars, the bloated self-will of Nero, or the dull and literal effeminacy of some of the other emperors ! There is a sort of presence in sculpture, more than in any other representations of art. It is curious to see how instinctively people will fall into this sentiment when they come into a place with busts and statues in it, however common. They hush, as if the images could hear them.

RICHARDSON

[From *The Town*]

IN a house, 'in the centre of Salisbury Square or Salisbury Court, as it was then called,' Richardson spent the greater part of his town life, and wrote his earliest work, *Pamela*. Probably a good part of all his works were composed there, as well as at Fulham, for the pen was never out of his hand. He removed from this house in 1755, after he had written all his works; and taking eight old tenements in the same quarter, pulled them down, and built a large and commodious range of warehouses and printing offices. 'The dwelling-house,' says Mrs Barbauld, 'was neither so large nor so airy as the one he quitted, and therefore the reader will not be so ready, probably, as Mr Richardson seems to have been, in accusing his wife of perverseness in not liking the new habitation as well as the old.'* This was the second Mrs Richardson. He calls her in other places his 'worthy-hearted wife'; but complains that she used to get her way by seeming to submit, and then returning to the point, when the heat

* *Correspondence of Samuel Richardson*, etc., by Anna Letitia Barbauld, vol. i. p. 97.—[L. H.]

of objection was over. She was a formal woman. His own manners were strict and formal with regard to his family, probably because he had formed his notions of life from old books, and also because he did not well know how to begin to do otherwise (for he was naturally bashful), and so the habit continued through life. His daughters addressed him in their letters by the title of 'Honoured Sir,' and are always designating themselves as 'ever dutiful.' Sedentary living, eternal writing, and perhaps that indulgence in the table, which, however moderate, affects a sedentary man twenty times as much as an active one, conspired to hurt his temper (for we may see by his picture that he grew fat, and his philosophy was in no respect as profound as he thought it) ; but he was a most kind-hearted generous man ; kept his pocket full of plums for children, like another Mr Burchell ; gave a great deal of money away in charity, very handsomely too ; and was so fond of inviting friends to stay with him, that when they were ill, he and his family must needs have them to be nursed. Several actually died at his house at Fulham, as at an hospital for sick friends.

It is a fact not generally known (none of

his biographers seem to have known it) that Richardson was the son of a joiner, received what education he had (which was very little, and did not go beyond English), at Christ's Hospital.* It may be wondered how he could come no better taught from a school which had sent forth so many good scholars ; but in his time, and indeed till very lately, that foundation was divided into several schools, none of which partook of the lessons of the others ; and Richardson, agreeably to his father's intention of bringing him up to trade, was most probably confined to the writing-school, where all that was taught was writing and arithmetic. It was most likely here that he intimated his future career, first by writing a letter, at eleven years of age, to a censorious woman of fifty, who pretended a zeal for religion ; and afterwards, at thirteen, by composing love-letters to their sweethearts for three young women in the neighbourhood, who made him their confidant. To these and others he also used to read books, their mothers being of the party ; and they encouraged him to make remarks ; which is exactly the sort of life he led with Mrs

* Our authority (one of the highest in this way) is Mr Nichols, in his *Literary Anecdotes of the Eighteenth Century*, vol. iv. p. 579.—[L. H.]

Chapone, Miss Fielding, and others, when in the height of his celebrity. 'One of the young women,' he informs us, 'highly gratified with her lover's fervour, and vows of everlasting love, has said, when I have asked her direction, "I cannot tell you what to write, but (her heart on her lips), you cannot write too kindly"; all her fear was that she should incur a slight for her kindness.' This passage, with its pretty breathless parenthesis, is in the style of his books. If the writers among his female coterie in after-life owed their inspiration to him, he only returned to them what they had done for himself. Women seem to have been always about him, both in town and country; which made Mrs Barbauld say, very agreeably, that he 'lived in a kind of flower-garden of ladies.' This has been grudged him, and thought effeminate; but we must make allowance for early circumstances, and recollect what the garden produced for us. Richardson did not pretend to be able to do without female society. Perhaps, however, they did not quiet his sensibility so much as they charmed it. We think, in his Correspondence, a tendency is observable to indulge in fancies, not always so paternal as they agree to call them; though doubtless all was said

in honour, and the ladies never found reason to diminish their reverence. A great deal has been said of his vanity and the weakness of it. Vain he undoubtedly was, and vanity is no strength ; but it is worth bearing in mind, that a man is often saved from vanity, not because he is stronger than another, but because he is less amiable, and did not begin as Richardson did, with being a favourite so early. Few men are surrounded, as he was, from his very childhood, with females ; and few people think so well of their species or with so much reason. In all probability, too, he was handsome when young, which is another excuse for him. His vanity is more easily excused than his genius accounted for, considering the way in which he lived. The tone of Lovelace's manners and language, which has created so much surprise in an author who was a city printer, and passed his life among a few friends between Fleet Street and a suburb, was caught, probably, not merely from Cibber, but from the famous profligate Duke of Wharton, with whom he became acquainted in the course of his business. But the unwearied vivacity with which he has supported it is wonderful. His pathos is more easily accounted for by his nerves, which for many years were in a

constant state of excitement, particularly towards the close of his life, which terminated in 1761, at the age of seventy-two, with the death most common to sedentary men of letters, a stroke of apoplexy.

ON BOOKS

[From the *Indicator*, 1834]

I ENTRENCH myself in my books equally against sorrow and the weather. If the wind comes through a passage, I look about to see how I can fence it off by a better disposition of my movables; if a melancholy thought is importunate, I give another glance at my *Spenser*. When I speak of being in contact with my books, I mean it literally. I like to lean my head against them. Living in a southern climate, though in a part sufficiently northern to feel the winter, I was obliged, during that season, to take some of the books out of the study, and hang them up near the fireplace in the sitting-room, which is the only room that has such a convenience. I therefore walled myself in, as well as I could, in the manner above mentioned. I took a walk every day, to the astonishment of the Genoese, who used to huddle against a piece of sunny wall,

like flies on a chimney-piece ; but I did this only that I might so much the more enjoy my *English* evening. The fire was a wood fire instead of a coal ; but I imagined myself in the country. I remember at the very worst that one end of my native land was not nearer the other than England is to Italy.

While writing this article I am in my study again. Like the rooms in all houses in this country which are not hovels, it is handsome and ornamented. On one side it looks towards a garden and the mountains ; on another to the mountains and the sea. What signifies all this ? I turn my back upon the sea ; I shut up even one of the side windows looking upon the mountains, and retain no prospect but that of the trees. On the right and left of me are book-shelves ; a bookcase is affectionately open in front of me ; and thus kindly enclosed with my books and the green leaves, I write. If all this is too luxurious and effeminate, of all luxuries it is the one that leaves you the most strength. And this is to be said of scholarship in general. It unfits a man for activity, for his bodily part in the world ; but it often doubles both the power and the sense of his mental duties ; and with much

indignation against his body, and more against those who tyrannise over the intellectual claims of mankind, the man of letters, like the magician of old, is prepared 'to play the devil' with the great men of this world, in a style that astonishes both the sword and the toga.

I do not like this fine large study. I like elegance. I like room to breathe in, and even walk about, when I want to breathe and walk about. I like a great library next my study ; but for the study itself, give me a small snug place, almost entirely walled with books. There should be only one window in it, looking upon trees. Some prefer a place with few or no books at all—nothing but a chair or a table, like Epictetus ; but I should say that these were philosophers, not lovers of books, if I did not recollect that Montaigne was both. He had a study in a round tower, walled as aforesaid. It is true one forgets one's books while writing—at least they say so. For my part, I think I have them in a sort of sidelong mind's-eye ; like a second thought, which is none—like a water-fall or a whispering wind.

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I own I borrow books with as much

facility as I lend. I cannot see a work that interests me on another person's shelf, without a wish to carry it off ; but, I repeat, that I have been much more sinned against than sinning in the article of non-return ; and am scrupulous in the article of intention. I never had a felonious intent upon a book but once ; and then I shall only say, it was under circumstances so peculiar, that I cannot but look upon the conscience that induced me to restore it, as having sacrificed the spirit of its very self to the letter ; and I have a grudge against it accordingly. Some people are unwilling to lend their books. I have a special grudge against them, particularly those who accompany their unwillingness with uneasy professions to the contrary, and smiles like Sir Fretful Plagiary. The friend who helped to spoil my notions of property, or rather to make them too good for the world 'as it goes,' taught me also to undervalue my squeamishness in refusing to avail myself of the books of these gentlemen. He showed me how it was doing good to all parties to put an ordinary face on the matter ; though I know his own blushed not a little sometimes in doing it, even when the good to be done was for another. I feel, in truth, that even when anger inclines me to exercise

this privilege of philosophy, it is more out of revenge than contempt. I fear that in allowing myself to borrow books, I sometimes make extremes meet in a very sinful manner, and do it out of a refined revenge. It is like eating a miser's beef at him.

I yield to none in my love of bookstall urbanity. I have spent as happy moments over the stalls as any literary apprentice boy who ought to be moving onwards. But I confess my weakness in liking to see some of my favourite purchases neatly bound. The books I like to have about me most are—Spenser, Chaucer, the minor poems of Milton, the *Arabian Nights*, Theocritus, Ariosto, and such old good-natured speculations as Plutarch's *Morals*. For most of these I like a plain, good, old binding, never mind how old, provided it wears well; but my *Arabian Nights* may be bound in as fine and flowery a style as possible, and I should love an engraving to every dozen pages. Book-prints of all sorts, bad and good, take with me as much as when I was a child: and I think some books, such as Prior's Poems, ought always to have portraits of the authors. Prior's airy face with his cap on is like having his company. From early association, no edition of Milton pleases me so much

as that in which there are pictures of the Devil with brute ears, dressed like a Roman General : nor of Bunyan, as the one containing the print of the Valley of the Shadow of Death, with the Devil whispering in Christian's ear, or old Pope by the wayside, and

Vanity Fair,
With the Pilgrims suffering there.

I delight in the recollection of the puzzle I used to have with the frontispiece of the *Tale of a Tub*, of my real horror at the sight of that crawling old man, representing Avarice, at the beginning of *Enfield's Speaker*, the *Looking-Glass*, or some such book ; and even of the careless school-boy hats, and the prim stomachers and cottage bonnets, of such golden-age antiquities as the *Village School*. The oldest and most worn-out woodcut, representing King Pippin, Goody Two Shoes, or the grim Soldan, sitting with three staring blots for his eyes and mouth, his sceptre in one hand, and his other five fingers raised and spread in admiration at the feats of the Gallant London 'Prentice, cannot excite in me a feeling of ingratitude. Cooke's edition of the *British Poets and Novelists* came out when I was at school : for which reason I could never put up with Suttaby's or

Walker's publications, except in the case of such works as the *Fairy Tales*, which Mr Cooke did not publish. Besides, they are too cramped, thick and mercenary ; and the pictures are all frontispieces. They do not come in at the proper places. Cooke realised the old woman's *beau ideal* of a prayer-book, — 'A little book, with a great deal of matter, and a large type : '—for the type was really large for so small a volume. Shall I ever forget his Collins and his Gray, books at once so 'superbly ornamented' and so inconceivably cheap ? Sixpence could procure much before ; but never could it procure so much as then, or was at once so much respected, and so little cared for. His artist Kirk was the best artist, except Stothard, that ever designed for periodical works ; and I will venture to add (if his name rightly announces his country) the best artist Scotland ever produced, except Wilkie, but he unfortunately had not enough of his country in him to keep him from dying young. His designs for Milton and the *Arabian Nights*, his female extricated from the water in the *Tales of the Genii*, and his old hag issuing out of the chest of the Merchant Abadah in the same book, are before me now, as vividly as they were then. He

possessed elegance and the sense of beauty in no ordinary degree ; though they sometimes played a trick or so of foppery. I shall never forget the gratitude with which I received an odd number of Akenside, value sixpence, one of the set of that poet, which a boarder distributed among three or four of us, 'with his mother's compliments.' The present might have been more lavish, but I hardly thought of that. I remember my number. It was the one in which there is a picture of the poet on a sofa, with Cupid coming to him, and the words underneath, 'Tempt me no more, insidious love !' The picture and the number appeared to me equally divine. I cannot help thinking to this day, that it is right and natural in a gentleman to sit in a stage dress, on that particular kind of sofa, though on no other, with that exclusive hat and feathers on his head, telling Cupid to begone with a tragic air.

How pleasant it is to reflect, that all those lovers of books have themselves become books ! What better metamorphosis could Pythagoras have desired ? How Ovid and Horace exulted in anticipating theirs ! And how the world have justified their exultation ! They had a right to triumph over brass and

marble. It is the only visible change which changes no farther ; which generates and yet is not destroyed. Consider : mines themselves are exhausted ; cities perish ; kingdoms are swept away, and man weeps with indignation to think that his own body is not immortal.

Muoinono le città, muoiono i regni,
E l' uom d' esser mortal par che si sdegni.

Yet this little body of thought, that lies before me in the shape of a book, has existed thousands of years, nor since the invention of the press can anything short of an universal convulsion of nature abolish it. To a shape like this, so small yet so comprehensive, so slight yet so lasting, so insignificant yet so venerable, turns the mighty activity of Homer, and so turning, is enabled to live and warm us for ever. To a shape like this turns the placid sage of Academus : to a shape like this grandeur of Milton, the exuberance of Spenser, the pungent elegance of Pope, and the volatility of Prior. In one small room, like the compressed spirits of Milton, can be gathered together

The assembled souls of all that men held wise.

May I hope to become the meanest of these

existences ? This is a question which every author who is a lover of books asks himself some time in his life ; and which must be pardoned, because it cannot be helped. I know not. I cannot exclaim with the poet,

Oh that my name were number'd among theirs,
Then gladly would I end my mortal days.

For my mortals days, few and feeble as the rest of them may be, are of consequence to others. But I should like to remain visible in this shape. The little of myself that pleases myself, I could wish to be accounted worth pleasing others. I should like to survive so, were it only for the sake of those who love me in private, knowing as I do what a treasure is the possession of a friend's mind when he is no more. At all events, nothing while I live and think can deprive me of my value for such treasures. I can help the appreciation of them while I last, and love them till I die ; and perhaps, if fortune turns her face once more in kindness upon me before I go, I may chance, some quiet day, to lay my overbeating temples on a book, and so have the death I most envy.

GENIUS

[From *Imagination and Fancy*, 1834]

O LOVELY and immortal privilege of genius ! that can stretch its hand out of the wastes of time, thousands of years back, and touch our eyelids with tears. In these passages there is not a word which a man of the most matter of fact understanding might not have written, *if he had thought of it*. But in poetry, feeling and imagination are necessary to the perception and presentation even of matters of fact. They, and they only, see what is proper to be told, and what to be kept back ; what is pertinent, affecting, and essential. Without feeling, there is a want of delicacy and distinction ; without imagination there is no true embodiment. In poets, even good of their kind, but without a genius for narration, the action would have been encumbered or diverted with ingenious mistakes. The over contemplative would have given us too many remarks ; the over-lyrical, a style too much carried away ; the over-fanciful, conceits and too many similes ; the unimaginative, the facts without the feeling, and not even those. We should have been told nothing of the ‘grey chin,’ of the house

hearing them as they moaned, or of Achilles gently putting the old man aside ; much less of that yearning for his father, which made the hero tremble in every limb. Writers without the greatest passion and power do not feel in this way, nor are capable of expressing the feeling ; though there is enough sensibility and imagination all over the world to enable mankind to be moved by it, when the poet strikes his truth into their hearts.

TURKEYS

[From the *Table-Talk*]

It is amusing to see the turkey strutting and gobbling about the homestead. He looks like a burlesque on the peacock. Good old Admiral S. ! How sorry he was to hear the simile ; and what good things he had to say on the worth of turkeys in general, and of a foreign species of the race in particular. But is it not true ? Look at the animal's attempt to get up a sensation with his 'tail,' or what is called such. Look at the short-coming size of it, the uncouth heaviness of his body, the sombre tawdriness of his colours, and, above all, that ineffable drawing back of the head and throat into an intensity of the arrogant and self-satisfied !

He looks like a corpulent fop in a paroxysm of conceit. John Reeve was not greater in the character of Marmaduke Magog the beadle, when he stamped the ground in a rapture of pomp and vanity. Bubb Doddington might have looked so, when he first put on his peer's robes, and practised dignity before a looking-glass. The name of Bubb is very turkey-like. The bird's familiar name in Scotland, admirably expressive of its appearance, is Bubbly Jock. Goethe says that Nature has a lurking sense of comedy in her, and sometimes intends to be jocose; and it is not difficult to imagine it when one considers that she includes art, and comedy itself, and is the inventress of turkeys.

The turkey is a native of America, and Franklin recommended it for the national symbol!

WOMANLY GALLANTRY

[From *A Year of Honeymoons*]

WHEN I had finished this lovely passage, Harriet, who had been loud and profuse in her expressions of delight at the others, said simply at this in a low voice, 'How *very* sweet!' and stooping down on my hand, kissed it. It was to thank me for all the thoughts which she knew had passed between

us on the subject, though we had not spoken, and for the relief I had afforded her by means of the poet. She is exquisite at this kind of *womanly gallantry*, if I may so call it, without degrading the feeling by the word. She never would allow from the first (indeed I never contested the point with her), that all the manifestation of courtesy, and deference, and gratitude should be on the man's side ; and she says there are moments of exceeding fullness of heart, understood on both sides, when it is a grace in a woman to be foremost in manifesting her feelings. I know that, from a person of her exquisite taste, it is a very exquisite compliment.

THE HOOP

[From *The Old Court Suburb*]

THE hoop is considered the most monstrous enormity that ever made its appearance in the world of fashion. We confess we cannot think so. We think the notion originates in a mistake ;—in a confusion of ideas ;—and that the monstrosity was confined to its minor phases ;—to the drum, the go-cart, and the pair of panniers ; which last was the form of it that prevailed towards the close of the reign of George the Third ; and,

under which it finally went out in that of his son (for the hoop lasted a good hundred years in England) : and even the panniers, we think, were by no means at their worst, when they were at their biggest. For the philosophy of the matter (to use a modern phrase) we take to be this. The hoop, like any other habiliment, was only ugly inasmuch as it interfered with the mind's idea of the body's shape. It was ugly when it made the hips appear dislocated, the body swollen, the gait unnatural ; in other words, as long as it suggested the idea of some actual deformity, and might have been considered as made to suit it.

But when it was large, and the swell of it hung at a proper distance from the person, it became, not an habiliment, but an enclosure. The person stood aloof from it, and was imagined to do so. The lady, like a goddess, was half concealed in a hemisphere ; out of which the rest of her person rose, like Venus out of the billows. When she moved, and the hoop was of proper length as well as breadth, she did not walk ;—her steps were not visible ;—she was borne along ; she was wafted ; came gliding. So issued the Wortley Montagues, the Coventrys, and the Harveys out of their

sedans ; and came radiant with admirations of beholders, through avenues of them at palace doors. Thus, poor Marie Antoinette came, during the height of her bloom and ascendancy, through arrays on either side, of guards and adorers ; and swept along with her the eyes and the reformations of Mr Burke.

Therefore, we do not at all wonder at the enthusiasm of Thomson in his juvenile days, when he wrote the verses on Beauty :—

One thing I mind—a spreading hoop she wore
Than nothing which adorns a lady more.
With equal rage could I its beauties sing,
I'd, with the hoop, make all Parnassus ring.

With ladies there my ravish'd eyes did meet,
That oft I've seen grace fair Edina's street,
When their broad hoops cut through the willing air
Pleased to give place unto the lovely fair.

He thought High Street, Edinburgh,
heaven itself while the hoops were thus
ethereally making their way :—

Sure this is like those blissful seats above,
Where all is peace, transporting joy, and love.

And again, in some verses written expressly
'On the Hoop.' Its appearance, it seems,

in the Scottish capital, was not equally welcome to all parties. There were grave elders, whose imaginations beheld more danger in it than was conceivable by the juvenile poet. He grows angry, calls them hypocrites, and vindicates the innocence of the beloved enormity in a pleasant strain of mingled indignation, humour, and weak versification. There is one capital line, however, about the Quakers :—

The hoop, the darling, justly, of the fair,
Of every generous swain deserves the care.
It is unmanly to desert the weak ;
'Twould urge a stone, if possible, to speak,
To hear staunch hypocrites bawl out, and cry
'This hoop 's a (wanton) garb ; fie, ladies, fie ?'
O cruel and audacious man, to blast
The fame of ladies more than vestals chaste !
Should you go search the globe throughout,
None will you find so pious and devout,
So modest, chaste, so handsome, and so fair,
As our dear Caledonian ladies are.
When awful beauty puts on all her charms,
Naught gives our sex such terrible alarms,
As when the hoop and tartan both combine
To make a virgin like a goddess shine.
Let Quakers cut their clothes unto the quick,
And with severities themselves afflict,
But may the hoop adorn Edina's Street,
Till the South Pole shall with the Northern meet.

Thomson's countryman, Allan Ramsay, was

equally zealous in behalf of hoops and tartans. He has even a good word to say for patches :—

In your opinion, nothing matches,
O horrid sin ! the crime of patches !
'Tis false, ye clowns. I'll make 't appear,
The glorious sun does patches wear ;
Yea, run through every frame of nature,
You'll find a patch for every creature ;
E'en you yourselves, ye blacken'd wretches,
To Heliconians are the patches.

Milton likens Dalila full dressed to a ship in full sail :—

With all her bravery on, and tackle trim,
Sails fill'd, and streamers waving.

But Dalila must have been dressed after Eastern fashion, which was rather draped than swelling ; more turbaned or hooded, than topped with ribbons. What could he have said, had he seen his image of the ship enlarged and made out after true naval fashion, by the swelling hoop, the air-catching fan, the solid, mast-like stomacher, re-ascending in the pillar of the throat, and the 'streamers waving in the wind,' of ribbons *à la Fontange* ?

Imagine a squadron of them,—a dozen sail of the line (of beauty),—headed by Admiral

the Lady Mary, or my Lady Hervey, supported by Captains Mrs Hewet and Mrs Murray, or Commanders the Demoiselles Bellenden and Lepell. They are all coming up the great high roadstead of Kensington Gardens, between Bayswater and the town ; the gentlemen-beholders dying by hundreds in their swords and periwigs, with their hats under arms ; and the ladies who have not been to court that day feeling envious of the slaughter. Their sails are not mere white or brown : they are of all the colours of the rainbow, varied with gold and silver ; and Pope, who is looking from one of the Palace windows with Dr Mead, sees the spirits of his *Rape of the Lock* filliping the jewels in their ears, to make them tremble in the sun.

DREAMS

[From *Of Dreams*]

It is certain enough that dreams in general proceed from indigestion ; and it appears nearly as much so, that they are more or less strange according to the waking fancy of the dreamer. It is probable that a trivial degree of indigestion will give rise to very fantastic dreams in a fanciful mind ; while, on the other hand, a good orthodox repletion

is necessary towards a fanciful creation in a dull one. It shall make an epicure, of any vivacity, act as many parts in his sleep as a tragedian, 'for that night only.' The inspirations of veal, in particular, are accounted extremely Delphic ; Italian pickles partake of the same spirit of Dante ; and a butter-boat shall contain as many ghosts as Charon's.

There is a passage in Lucian which would have made a good subject for those who painted the temptations of the saints. It is a description of the City of Dreams, very lively and crowded. We quote after Natalis Comes, not having the *True History* by us. The city, we are told, stands in an immense plain, surrounded by a thick forest of tall poppy-trees, and enormous mandragoras. The plain is also full of all sorts of somnolent plants, and the trees are haunted with multitudes of owls and bats, but no other bird. The city is washed by the river Lethe, called by others the Nightbringer, whose course is inaudible, and like the flowing of oil. (Spenser's follower, Browne, has been here—

Where consort none other fowl,
Save the bat and sullen owl ;
Where flows Lethe without coil,
Softly like a stream of oil.)

There are two gates to the city : one of horn in which almost everything that can happen in sleep is represented, as in a transparency ; the other of ivory, in which the dreams are but dimly shadowed. The principal temple is that of Night ; and there are others, dedicated to Truth and Falsehood, who have oracles. The population consists of Dreams, who are of an infinite variety of shape. Some are small and slender ; others distorted, humped, and monstrous ; others proper and tall, with blooming, good-tempered faces. Others, again, have terrible countenances, are winged, and seem eternally threatening the city with some calamity ; while others walk about in the pomp and garniture of kings. If any mortal comes into the place, there is a multitude of Domestic Dreams, who meet him with offers of service ; and they are followed by some of the others that bring him good or bad news, generally false ; for the inhabitants of that city are, for the most part, a lying and crafty generation, speaking one thing and thinking another. This is having a new advantage over us. Only think of the mental reservation of a Dream !

ANGLING

[From the *Indicator*, 1824]

THE anglers are a race of men who puzzle us. We do not mean for their patience, which is laudable, nor for the infinite non-success of some of them, which is desirable. Neither do we agree with the good old joke attributed to Swift, that angling is always to be considered as 'a stick and a string, with a fly at one end and a fool at the other.' Nay, if he had books with him, and a pleasant day, we can account for the joyousness of that prince of punters, who, having been seen in the same spot one morning and evening, and asked whether he had had any success, said No, but in the course of the day he had had 'a glorious nibble.'

But the anglers boast of the innocence of their pastime; yet it puts fellow-creatures to the torture. They pique themselves on their meditative faculties; and yet their only excuse is a want of thought. It is this that puzzles us. Old Isaac Walton, their patriarch, speaking of his inquisitorial abstractions on the banks of a river, says,

Here we may
Think and pray,
Before death
Stops our breath.

Other joys
Are but toys,
And to be lamented.

So saying, he 'stops the breath' of a trout, by plucking him up into an element too thin to respire, with a hook and a tortured worm in his jaws—

Other joys
Are but toys.

If you ride, walk, or skate, or play at cricket, or at rackets, or enjoy a ball or a concert, it is 'to be lamented.' To put pleasure into the faces of half-a-dozen agreeable women is a toy unworthy of the manliness of a worm-sticker. But to put a hook into the gills of a carp—there you attain the end of a reasonable being; there you show yourself truly a lord of the creation. To plant your feet occasionally in the mud is also a pleasing step. So is cutting your ankles with weeds and stones—

Other joys
Are but toys.

The book of Isaac Walton upon angling is a delightful performance in some respects. It smells of the country air, and of the flowers in cottage windows. Its pictures of

rural scenery, its simplicity, its snatches of old songs, are all good and refreshing ; and his prodigious relish of a dressed fish would not be grudged him, if he had killed it a little more decently. He really seems to have a respect for a piece of salmon ; to approach it, like the grace, with his hat off. But what are we to think of a man, who, in the midst of his tortures of other animals, is always valuing himself on his harmlessness ; and who actually follows up one of his most complacent passages of this kind with an injunction to impale a certain worm twice upon the hook, because it is lively, and might get off ! All that can be said of such an extraordinary inconsistency is, that having been bred up in an opinion of the innocence of his amusement, and possessing a healthy power of exercising voluntary thoughts (as far as he had any), he must have dozed over the opposite side of the question, so as to become almost, perhaps quite, insensible to it. And angling does indeed seem the next thing to dreaming. It dispenses with locomotion, reconciles contradictions, and renders the very countenance null and void. A friend of ours, who is an admirer of Walton, was struck, just as we were, with the likeness of the old angler's face to a fish. It is hard,

angular, and of no expression. It seems to have been 'subdued to what it worked in'; to have become native to the watery element. One might have said to Walton, 'Oh flesh, how art thou fishified!' He looks like a pike, dressed in broadcloth instead of butter.

SHAKING HANDS

[From the *Indicator*, 1834]

AMONG the first things which we remember noticing in the manners of people, were two errors in the custom of shaking hands. Some, we observed, grasped everybody's hand alike,—with an equal fervour of grip. You would have thought that Jenkins was the best friend they had in the world; but on succeeding to the squeeze, though a slight acquaintance, you found it equally flattering to yourself; and on the appearance of somebody else (whose name, it turned out, the operator had forgotten) the crush was no less complimentary: the face was as earnest and beaming, the 'glad to see you' as syllabical and sincere, and the shake as close, as long, and as rejoicing, as if the semi-unknown was a friend come home from the Deserts.

On the other hand, there would be a

gentleman, now and then, as coy of his hand as if he were a prude, or had a whitlow. It was in vain that your pretensions did not go beyond the 'civil salute' of the ordinary shake; or that being introduced to him in a friendly manner, and expected to shake hands with the rest of the company, you could not in decency omit his. His fingers, half coming out and half retreating, seemed to think that you were going to do them a mischief; and when you got hold of them the whole shake was on your side; the other hand did but proudly or pensively acquiesce—there was no knowing which; you had to sustain it, as you might a lady's in handing her to a seat; and it was an equal perplexity to know whether to shake or to let it go. The one seemed a violence done to the patient, the other an awkward responsibility brought upon yourself. You did not know, all the evening, whether you were not an object of dislike to the person; till, on the party's breaking up, you saw him behave like an equally ill-used gentleman to all who practised the same unthinking civility.

Both these errors, we think, might as well be avoided; but, of the two, we must say we prefer the former. If it does not look

so much like particular sincerity, it looks more like general kindness ; and if those two virtues are to be separated (which they assuredly need not be, if considered without spleen), the world can better afford to dispense with an unpleasant truth than a gratuitous humanity. Besides, it is more difficult to make sure of the one than to practise the other, and kindness itself is the best of all truths. As long as we are sure of that, we are sure of something, and of something pleasant. It is always the best end, if not in every instance the most logical means.

This manual shyness is sometimes attributed to modesty, but never, we suspect, with justice, unless it be that sort of modesty, whose fear of committing itself is grounded in pride. Want of address is a better reason ; but this particular instance of it would be grounded in the same feeling. It always implies a habit either of pride or mistrust. We have met with two really kind men who evinced this soreness of hand. Neither of them, perhaps, thought himself inferior to anybody about him, and both had good reason to think highly of themselves, but both had been sanguine men contradicted in their early hopes. There was a plot to

meet the hand of one of them with a fish-slice, in order to show him the disadvantage to which he put his friends by that flat mode of salutation ; but the conspirator had not the courage to do it. Whether he heard of the intention we know not, but shortly afterwards he took very kindly to a shake. The other was the only man of a warm set of politicians who remained true to his first hopes of mankind. He was impatient at the change in his companions, and at the folly and inattention of the rest ; but though his manner became cold, his consistency remained warm, and this gave him a right to be as strange as he pleased.

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* * * Fuller bibliographies of Leigh Hunt may be found in Mr Roger Ingpen's edition of 'The Autobiography,' 1903, and in the Appendix to Mr C. Monkhouse's 'Life of Leigh Hunt,' compiled by Mr Anderson. To both of these works the editor of this volume expresses his indebtedness.

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